

A
TREATISE
For an OF *Conning*
BENIGNITY.

WRITTEN BY FATHER
FRANCIS ARIAS, OF THE
Society of IESVS, in his second
parte of the Imitation of Christ
our Lord.

Translated into English.

Estote inuicem Benigni, misericor-
des, donantes inuicem, sicut &
Deus in Christo donauit vobis.

Be benigne to one an other, mer-
cifull, pardoning one an other, as
God in Christ hath pardoned you.



With permission of Superiours
Anno 1630.

#64-405



TO THE READER.

GOOD Reader,
The tráslatour of
the treatice of *Pa-*
tience lately printed, had
also rendred this of *Benig-*
nity out of rhe same Au-
tour: but it came not in
time to be dispatched with
it; & therefore goeth here
a parte by it selfe, It will
serue no lesse then that o-
ther

ther of *Patience* to inamour
vs with *Christ* our Lord, if
we will consider the vn-
speakable sweetnesse of his
charity, whilest he made
the world happy by con-
uersing in it. The parti-
culars whereof thou shalt
finde, Good Reader, admi-
rably expressed in this trea-
tice by this holy Autour;
which is therefore recom-
mended vnto thee.

A TABLE



A TABLE OF THE CHAPTERS.

THE I. CHAPTER.

IN what the vertue of Benignity consisteth; and how Christ our Lord discovered it, in the Myſteries of his Incarnation, Nativity, and Apparition to the Shepheards, and in the vocation of the Gentiles in the person of the Magi. pag. I

The 2. Chap. Of the Benignity which Christ our Lord used towards sinners, and other very weake and imperfect men, supporting

A Table

ting and instructing them. pag. 17

The 3. Chap. Of the Benignity which Christ our Lord used towards the Apostles, enduring and curing their defects. p. 34

The 4. Chap. Of other examples of that Benignity which our Lord used towards his disciples; enduring their imperfections, and sweetly curing their ignorances, and other defects. p. 40

The 5. Chap. How we are to imitate this Benignity of Christ our Lord. p. 57

The 6. Chap. Of the Benignity which Christ our Lord did use, in touching sicke and leproous persons with his owne sacred bands. p. 74

The 7. Chap. How the Saints haue imitated this Benignity of Christ

Of the Chapters.

Christ our Lord towards sicke persons. pag. 82

The 8. Chap. Of the Benignity, which Christ our Lord did use to diuers blinde men, hearken-
ing to them, expecting them,
and illuminating them, and how
wee are to imitate him in this Be-
nignity. p. 93

The 9. Chap. Of the Benig-
nity which Christ our Lord shew-
ed to little children; and what he
taught vs thereby. p. 102

The 10. Chap. Of the Benig-
nity, which Christ our Lord shew-
ed towards wicked persons, vvho
came to him with a corrupt inten-
tion. p. 111

The 11. Chap. Of the Benig-
nity, which wee are to use to-
wards our neighbours, doing them
honour

A Table

honour by good vvordes; and of
the examples vvhich Christ our
Lord gaue vs herein. pag. 122

The 12. Chap. Of other ex-
amples, vvhich Christ our Lord
gaue vs, of his Benignity in the
same kinde. p. 132

The 13. Chap. Of the Benig-
nity, and curtesy of speeche, vvhich
the holy Apostles vsed in imita-
tion of Christ our Lord. p. 142

The 14. Chap. How vve are
to exercise this Benignity, and to
use this good manners, to vvards
them vvho use vs ill. p. 157

The 15. Chap. That it is not
contrary to Benignity, to repre-
hend vvicked, and obstinate per-
sons in their vvickednes, seuerely
as Christ our Lord did. p. 161

The 16. Chap. That it vvvas
con-

Of the Chapters.

conuenient, that Christ our Lord should vse these seuerer reprehensions, to teach the Prelates of his Church, how they should proceed against sinners: and how the Saints haue been euer wont to proceed.

pap. 176.

The 17. Chap. Of the Benignity, vvhetherwith a Christian it is to be glad of the good of his neighbour, and to approue and praise the same: and of the example, vvhich Christ our Lord gaue vs thereof.

p. 192

The 18. Chap. Of the intention, and moderation, vvhetherwith wee are to praise vertue in our neighbours: and of the examples vvhich Christ our Lord gaue vs thereof.

p. 207

The 19. Chap. How we must praise

praise

A Table

praise vertue, for the making it be more esteemed: and of the examples vvhich Christ our Lord gaue vs to this purpose. pag. 220

The 20. Chap. *How it is fit to praise the vertue of some, thereby to correct the vice of others.* p. 231

The 21. Chap. *How vve are to praise the vertue of our neighbours, to defend them so, from some vniust slaunder.* p. 245

The 22. Chap. *How vve ought to praise vvise men, vvhen they are vertuous, to the end that others may profit by their example and doctrine.* p. 256

The 23. Chap. *Of the rule vvvhich vvee are to hold, vvhen vpon the aforesaid reason, vve shal praise the seruants of God.* p. 266

The

Of the Chapters.

The 24. Chap. Of other rules
vvhich vvee must obserue vvhens
vvee praise men: that is, that vve
praise some, vvithout offence to o-
thers: and that vvee doe it in mo-
derate vvords. pap. 276

The 25. Chap. Of the rules,
vvhich they are to keepe, vvho
are praised; that so they may be at
no preiudice, but receiue profit
thereby. p. 282



A T R E A

Of the chapters.

The first chapter of the book
is devoted to the general principles
of the subject, and is divided
into three parts. The first part
contains the definition of the
subject, and the second part
contains the history of the
subject. The third part contains
the principles of the subject.
The second chapter of the book
is devoted to the general principles
of the subject, and is divided
into three parts. The first part
contains the definition of the
subject, and the second part
contains the history of the
subject. The third part contains
the principles of the subject.

A T R E A

1

A

TREATISE OF THE
VERTVE OF BENIGNITY,
wherein the nature thereof is
declared, together with the
operations and exercises of
the same, and the examples
thereof, which Christ our
Lord gaue vs. Trāslated out F.
Frācis Arias of the Society of
Iesus, in his 2. part of the imi-
tation of Christ our Lord.

THE I. CHAPTER.

In What the vertue of Benignity consisteth; and how Christ our Lord discovered it, in the Mysteries of his Incarnation, Natiuity, and Apparitiō to the Shepheards, and in the vocation of the Gentiles in the person of the Magi.

T He vertue of Benignity consisteth in that a man desire,
A and

and dispose himselfe to doe good to his neighbour, whosoever he be; and in that he do it from the hearte; yea and with a sweet and tender kinde of will; and in that he put this will in execution by doing good indeed to his neighbour; and in that he do it abundantly, if it be in his power; and lastly in that it be with a kinde of contentment, and ioy. It doth also consist in that a man treat & conuerse with his neighbours after a sweet and gentle manner, condescending to them, and giuing them gust in any thing, which is lawfull, and agreable to the seruice of God; and behoulding them with a clear, and discharged countenance, and speaking to them in sweet and gentle words.

There are men, who in very truth haue the essentiall part of
the

the vertue of Charity with their neighbours, both friends, & enemies; both wishing them good, and performing it to them: but yet they fall short, in remedying their necessities according to their ability; and they are austere and sharpe in their conuersation, and dry and vntoward in performing the very good, which they doe.

The vertue of *Benignity*, doth cure and heale a man of all these defects; making him who is the owner of it, to loue his neighbour hartily, and sweetly; and to doe him good liberally & cheerfully; and to conuerse with him affably and gently, auoyding (for as much as the lawe, & good pleasure of God will permit) all that which may giue him any disgust, or paine. And so, *Benignity* falls out to be, the act and exercise

cise of *Charity*, with that perfection, which wee haue declared; and interiourly it embraceth the act of beneuolence and loue; and exteriorly the exercise of beneficence, liberality, affability, and of all sweetnes in conuersation. It is also one of *the fruites of the Holy Ghost*; For an act of vertue, in regard that it proceedeth from thence, and giueth gust to him who performeth it, is called a fruite; and therefore *Benignity* being an act of *Charity*, and causing delight in him, by whom it is possessed, is accounted amongst *the fruites of the Holy Ghost*. All this is confessed by the Saints, when they speake of *Benignity*. Saint *Isidorus* saith; That man is said to be *Benigne*, who doth good with a good will, and vseth sweetnes in his wordes. And Saint *Anselmus*, declaring what *Benignity* is, saith thus,

Of Benignity. Chap. i.

5

thus; *Benignity* is a good affection of the will, & a serenity of heart; in vertue whereof a man doth, for Gods sake giue all he can, after a gracious and cheerfull manner; and discourseth and conuerseth gently, and sweetly with his neighbours. And Saint Thomas, explicating the nature of *Benignity*, saith, that it is the very sweetness & tendernes of *Charity*, which spreads, & communicates it self exteriourly; & that as natural fier doth melt mettell, & make it flow; so the fier of loue, which is *Benignity*, maketh a mā scatter what he hath towards the succour of the necessities of his neighbours.

This is that, which the Saints say of *Benignity*, and the summe of it all is this: that it is the tendernes of *Charity*, which doth not only communicate a mans exteriour goods to his neighbour, but

engaged

A 3

roge.

together with them, it communicates his owne very bowells; which is, to discouer both by wordes, and workes, the dearnes & sweetnes of *Charity*. The Apostle declareth this, by saying, *Charity is Benigne*. Which signifieth, that it makes the man who possesseth it, not to be straight handed, but apt to communicate his goods; and not to be harsh or bitter; but that he communicate euen his very hart by conuersing with all men after an affable and sweet manner. And to giue vs to vnderstand this truth, the holy Scripture, doth by one & the selfe same Hebrew, and Greeke word, which signifieth *Benignity* in doing good, signify also a softnes, and sweetnes in the manner of shewing mercy. And so, whereas David saith; *Our Lord is sweet towards all*, another letter saith, *Our Lord is*
benigne

benigne towards all. And whereas he saith, *That mā is gentle, & sweet, who sheweth mercy;* another translation saith; *The man who sheweth mercy, is Benigne.* And therefore S. Basil, when he would explicat what it was, for a man to be *Benigne*, saith; that it is he, who doth liberally enlarge himselfe to doe good to all such as are in necessity. And he confirmeth it by that Psalme which saith, *Our Lord is benigne towards all;* and by that other, which also saith, *That a man is Benigne, who sheweth mercy,* and imparteth his goods to such as are in necessity.

In this *Benignity* did Christ our Lord instruct vs, and perswade vs to it, by many examples, & Mysteries of his holy life which wee wil édeauour to declare. The first and principall Mystery, wherein he discovered his *Benignity*, was that of his *Incarnation*. In that, the

most high sonne of God was pleased to become a naturall man, & to appeare visibly in the world in mortall flesh, obnoxious to the miseries and penalties of other men; and in that he did all this, to doe good to man; and to draw him to his loue, and so to saue him; not onely did he discover an immense loue towards vs, but a loue which was also most sweet and dear. And not onely did he communicate his blessings to vs, but he also did it with supreme liberality, and gust, and ioy of his owne sacred heart. And together with his blessings, he communicated to vs, his very selfe; namely his body, his blood, his blessed soule, and his diuinity; and all that which he hath, yea and euen all that which he is, he communicated to vs, by many admirable & mysterious waies. This did
the

Of Benignity. Chap. 1.

the Apostle signify by sayings; Whē in the time of grace, the Benignity & immēse loue of our God and Sauour to man, did manifest it selfe to the world, he saued and freed vs from our sinnes, not by the title of Iustice, and the merit of our workes, (which were not of any valew without Christ our Lord, for the arriuing to that end;) but through his owne great mercy, and most gracious bōūty, and by meanes of that sacred Lauatory, which is holy Baptisme, whereby wee are engendred a second time to be the sonnes of God, and renewed by a spirituall generation, & renouation, which is wrought by the holy Ghost; which Holy Ghost, the eternall Father hath by meanes of his gifts and graces infused and cōmunicated to vs in great abundance, through the merits of Christ.

our Lord, to the end that being
iustified through the grace of the
same Lord, wee might from this
instant become heires of eternall
life, which now wee haue by cer-
taine hope, and which hereafter
wee shall haue in actuall posses-
sion. This is deliuered by Saint
Paule. And Saint Bernard, vpon
these words, declaring that *Benig-
nity* of God which was discovered
in this Mystery discourseth thus.
Before the humanity of Christ our
Lord appeared in the world the
Benignity of God was hidden from
vs. There was already in God this
Benignity, & mercy, which in him
is eternall; but so great *Benignity*
as this, was not knowen before,
nor was there any meanes how to
to know it. And although it were
promised by the Prophets, yet
men vnderstood it not, and felt
it not, and many did not so much

as beleeue it. But when that time
arriued, which had been ordain-
ed by the diuine wisedome, Al-
mighty God came in mortall
flesh, and being vested with his
sacred *Humanity*, and appearing
to the eyes of our flesh & blood,
his *Benignity* came to be made
knowne; for by no meanes could
he more haue manifested his *Be-
nignity*, then by taking our flesh;
and by no meanes could he more
haue declared his mercy, then by
vndertaking our misery. Let mā
consider, and vnderstand from
hence, how great care God hath
of him; and how much he esteemeth
him; and for how mighty
an end he made him; since he did,
and suffered so great thinges for
him. And thus, by his *Humanity*
wee may know his *Benignity*; for
how much the lesse he became by
his *Humanity*, so much the grea-

ter doth he shew himselfe to be
in bounty; and by how much the
more he abased himselfe for vs, so
much the more amiable doth he
shew himselfe to vs. This is said by
Saint Bernard; and so it is a most
clear truth, that nothing hath
made so great discouery to vs of
the bounty, and *Benignity* of God,
nor hath moued & obliged vs so
to loue and praise him, as for
that he hath taken our *Humanity*.
And therefore as *Dauid* saith, *give*
praise to God, because he is benigne and
good; and sing praises to his name, be-
cause he is sweet.

Christ our Lord did also disco-
uer to vs his *Benignity*, after a most
soueraigne manner, in the *Mystery*
of his most holy *Nativity*. For what
loue can be imagined more deare?
& what communication of ones
selfe more amorous? & what dew
of heauen more abundant, and
more

Of Benignity. Chap. i. 13

more sweet, then to see that hidden
God, that God of vengeance, that God
of those Celestiall Hostes, that Iudge
of the quicke and dead, that Omnipotent
in his Workes, and that Terrible
in his iudgments? to see him I say,
become a tender and delicate little
Infant, hanging close vpon
the breasts of a Virgin; all burning
in loue, & all expiring the sweet-
nes, and dearnes of the same loue
towards vs? And that he comes to
vs, not as anciently he came to
the children of Israell in Mount
Horeb, with thunder and light-
ning, and with the terrible sound
of the trumper, and with huge
flames of materiall fier; and with
prohibition that no man should
approach to the foot of the mou-
taine vpon paine of death: but
that he should come to be borne
an Infant, and appeare on earth,
with a most clear, and sweet lichte
from

from heauen, to discover him;
 and with most delightful songes,
 and exultation of Angells; who
 being full of ioy, *sing Glory to God,*
and peace to men. And that instantly
 then, he should recreate, and ho-
 nour those poore shepheards with
 an Embassage performed by An-
 gells; and should inuite them to
 come visit him, and to receiue
 the comfort of his presence, and
 to be enriched with the gifts of
 grace through his goodnes. And
 that by his loue, and humility,
 and meeknes, and sweetnes, he
 should encourage all men to ap-
 proach towards him; and to come
 to him by faith and obedience;
 and so to take their part of all
 the riches and benedictions of
 heauē; for being the sonne of the
 eternall Father, *he came full of grace*
and truth.

He also discovered his Benig-
 nity

nity to vs, in the vocation of the
Magi, that first flower of the Cé-
riles, whom he meant to call in
after times. He calls them in-
stantly, as soon as he was borne,
and he sent no Prophet for them,
nor any Angell; for they had no
knowledge of Prophets, & they
were not wont to see Angells, and
so they might haue rather been
estranged by such vnusuall inui-
tations: but condescending to
their condition and custome, he
sent them a starre, which by the
nouelty thereof might moue the
to a kinde of admiration; and to
a search of what it might meane;
and by the secret vertue thereof
might be teaching them withall,
that it signified the birth of the
new King; and he admonished
and inuited them to seeke him, by
following that starre, & he gaue
them courage not to feare the ty-
rants

rant Herod; and he gaue the faith and deuotion to know, that the Infānt, whom they saw new borne, was the eternall God; that so they might dedicate themselues to do him eternall seruice, as to the King and Lord of heauen and earth, whom they saw in so great pouerty and contempt, for as much as concerned the world.

All this is the supreme *Benignity*, and most sweet dear loue of God towards man; and it inuites vs to seeke him; and if wee haue offended him, to confide, that lamenting our sinnes, we shall obtaine pardon of him; and that he will receiue vs, to his grace and loue. For now, when he hath already discovered his great *Benignity* to vs, by his sacred *Humanity*; with more reason doth he say, that to vs, which anciētly he said by the Prophet *Isaiah*, be you conuerted.

Of Benignity. Chap. i. 17

uerted to your Lord God for he is Benigne, and mercifull; and as he is Benigne, he taketh gust in dealing graciously, and most liberally with you, and in pardoning your offences past, and as he is merciful he wil deliuer you from your miseries, and from the greatest of them of all, which are your sinnes.

THE II. CHAPTER.

Of the Benignity Which Christ our Lord vsed towards sinners, and other very weake and imperfect men, supporting and instructing them.

AFTER our Lord had begun to manifest himselfe in Israell, and to conuerse with men, he discovered and exercised his Benignity, many seuerall waies: One of them

them was, that such persons as were ignorant, rude, and very imperfect, who came to demanda succour of him, he receiued with much sweetnes, and condescended to their great weakenes, and tolerated their rudenes, and after a mild and gentle manner, dispossessed them of their ignorance. *Nicodemus* the Pharisee, *Io. 3.* came to *Christ*, to be taught by him; and though our Lord saw his great weaknes, in that he had not the heart to publish himselfe for the disciple of *Christ* our Lord, nor to confesse his faith, for the feare he had to be persecuted by other Pharisees, and was ashamed that they should know of him, that being an Ancient, and Master in the lawe, he should goe to *Christ* to learne the Mysteries of the same Lawe; for which reason he went by night, & that in very secret.

secret manner. And though our Lord did well discern his great ignorance, and rudenes, and that he had no vnderstanding, or apprehension of spirituall thinges, or diuine Mysteries; but that whatsoeuer he said, and taught, the other did measure, and iudge of it by the rule of corporall and sensibles thinges, without raising his heart from earth to the consideration of things inuisible & diuine: notwithstanding all this, our benigne Lord, did not reprove these so notorious defects, with seuerity, nor did he exaggerate his ignorance, nor reproach him for his rudenes, nor condemne him for his inordinate feare, nor did he driue him away for his weakenes, nor shewed he any wearisomnes, or disgust in respect of his crosse answeres; but he entertained himselfe at large with him
alone,

alone, and held long discourse with him, whereby he did, after a sweet manner giue him to vnderstand his ignorance & rudenes; and he discovered to him the Mysteries, which were necessary for his saluation; namely the spirituall regeneratiō which is made by *Baptisme*; and the Mystery of the *Incarnation*; which he declared to him, by saying that he was in heauen, whereby he signified that he was God, and in all places at once. And by saying also that he was descended frō heauē, & he signified that he was true mā. He declared also the Mystery of his *Passiō*, by saying that he was to be raised vp to the Crosse, as the Brazen Serpēt was lifted vp vpon a pole, to the end that, as al they who beheld the serpent were cured of their corporall diseases, so might all they be healed of their sinnes, who

who would behould and belecue in him, with a liuely faith, It was a great Benignity to dissemble, or passe by so many defects of a timorous & imperfect man, and to discourse with him after so louing and sweet a manner; & to discouer so great Mysteries; to a person so rude and weake; and to giue him light to vnderstand them, & helpewhereby he might goe encreasing, and profiting in the good way which he had begunne.

There came to *Christ* our Lord, *Mat. 9 Marc. 5.* a Prince of the Synagogue, to aske remedy for a daughter of his, who already was at the last cast, and he held her for dead; as indeed she died instantly after; and he desired our Lord, that he would goe to his house, and lay his hand vpon her, that so he might giue her life. This man
coming

coming to *Christ* our Lord with so imperfect a faith, and with so meane a conceit of the power of our Lord, as to thinke that it would be necessary for the health of his daughter, that he must goe to his house, & lay his hand vpon her, not beleeuing that he could cure her without these ceremonies; yet notwithstanding all this, our Lord receiued him, and conuersed with him after so sweet a manner, and shewed himselfe so affable to him, that he dissembled the seeing of all these defects; and he reprobued him not for them, least he should haue griued him by his wordes, whereas he ment to cure him by his workes. Nor did he deny that which the other asked; nor did he differre the doing of it; but instantly he rose vp, and went with him, and graunted not onely that which he

he asked, but a great deale more. For he raised his dead daughter to life in body, and he also gaue health to her soule, by making her beleue firmly in him, vpon the sight of so great a miracle, and he moued and obliged him, to doe him seruice with deuotiō, for so singular a benefir.

This was an act of great *Benignity*, and so did Saint *Chrysostome* obserue thereof, saying; Behould the dullnes of this man, who for the health of his daughter, desires *Christ* our Lord that he will goe to his house, and lay his hand vpon her. And yet our Lord, not looking vpon the vnworthines of him who asked the benefir, did with much facility and suauity grant his suite, going presently to his house, to doe the thing which he desired, and much more then he desired. For he resolved to raise
her

her from death to life; and more-
ouer to giue a firme hope of the
Resurrection to them, who sawe,
and beleueed that miracle.

Let vs behould other examples
of the same kinde of *Benignity*, in
his receiuing rude, and imperfect
people, after a sweet manner, and
in teaching, and comforting the,
both by word and deed. *Iohn 4.*
There came a Samaritan woman
to *Christ* our Lord; and, notwith-
standing that she were a creature
of very base condition, and of
more base life; and a Gentile by
descent, and extreameley rude in
matters which concerned Reli-
gion and spirit, yet he inuited her
to haue speech with him, himselfe
beginning the discourse and de-
siring water of her, whereof he
knew he would not drinke; and
he fell into a most sweet and fa-
uourable communication with
her

her, and he made her a very long Sermon, full of Myſteries, and he paſſed by the rudenes both of her queſtions and anſweres; and he condeſcended to her ignorance; and he accommodated himſelfe to her weakenes; and by the reſemblance of corporall thinges taught her things which were ſpirituall; and by meanes of materiall water, he aduanced her to the vnderſtanding of the value, and effects of the water of grace. And he went inſtructing her by little and little; diſcovering to her firſt that he was a Prophet, and teaching her afterward, how ſhe was to honour one only God, with ſpirituall and true worſhip. And hauing already diſpoſed her, by the knowledge of theſe thinges, he plainly declared to her at laſt, that he was the very Meſſias, who was come to ſaue the world;

B

and

and that which he tould her in words, he imprinted in her heart, giuing her both light to belecue it, and courage, and deuotion to confesse it.

What dearnes, what sweernes of discourse, and conuersation, can be imagined to exceed this? That the Creator of all things should speake, in so familiar manner, with so base a creature, and that the eternal wisdom should vouchsafte by his very selfe, to instruct at so great leasure and by such a lowly manner of speech, so ignorant and rude a woman, and should giue so high mysteries to be vnderstood so quickly and so clearly by her.

This is the *Benignity*, which *Christ* our Lord vsed towards this woman, and the Apostles were in wonder at it, as Saint *Chrysostome* obserueth saying; The Apostles
were

were in admiration to see that excessive meekenes, and humility of *Christ* our Lord, in that he was content, so publickly and in sight of all men, to speake so of set purpose, and so at leasure, and so benignely with a poore woman, & that a poore Samaritan.

There came to *Christ* our Lord *Matt. 9. Marc. 5.* a sicke woman who was subiect to a bloody fluxe, and she came with much want of vertue; for out of shame and inordinate feare, she durst not discover her infirmity; and shee thought to keepe her selfe from being known by *Christ* our Lord, by meanes of the presse of people, coming secretly neer him, without the obseruatiō of others; and meaning, after this sorte, to steale health frō our Lord, without so much as his knowing of it, who was to giue it. But notwith-

standing shee came so imperfect and weake, our most pitreous Lord, did passe by all these defects of hers, without so much as reprehending them, or reproaching her for them; and he granted that which she desired, and hoped for, yea and much more then that. For instantly he cured her of that corporall infirmity, and he cured her soule, by taking away that vaine feare, to which she had bene subiect, and by enabling her to cōfesse both her sickness, and the health which she had receiued; and by augmenting in her, the gifts of faith and loue. And hauing vsed so great *Benignity* towards her by this worke, he was also benigne to her in words. For putting her into quiet, and giuing her comfort, he said, *Thy faith hath made the whole*. Which was as much as to say; In regard of
of

of that faith, wherewith thou diddest touch mee, although it was imperfect, I haue deliuered thee from thy disease: goe thy waies in peace, and still be free from the same disease. So saith *Chrysostome*. This woman had not a perfect opinion of *Christ* our Lord, for if she had, she would neuer haue imagined, that she could hide herself from him; & our Lord tooke publicke notice of her, for the good both of her selfe, and many others. For by discouering her, he tooke away her feare, and he preuented that remorse of conscience, which was to accuse her, as hauing stolne the gift of her health; and he rectified her from that false imagination; and he made her know, that nothing could be hid from our Lord, and then cōmēding her faith, he placed her for an example to be imi-

rated by others.

Wee also are to imitate *Christ* our Lord in that *Benignity* which he vsed towards such as came to him full of imperfection, weaknes and ignorance; and wee must receiue after a sweet manner our neighbours, when they come to vs full of necessity & ignorance; enduring with a serene countenance their importunity, & rudnes; and giuing care and satisfaction to their questions; and benignely instructing them in those thinges which are fit for them to be knowne by them, according to the capacity of euery one, and remouing the ignorance, wherein they are, & comforting the with the knowledge of truth, and the hope of saluation, and appeasing their conscience, deliuering the from vaine scruples and feares.

To this doth the Apostle Saint

Paule

Paule Gal. 6. aduise in these words. My brethren, if any of you be surpris'd by any sinne; as it happens to them who sinne out of Passion, or weaknes, or ignorāce, and not out of meer malice; and who are as it were preuented, and surpris'd by that sinne, into which they fall, because they haue not well considered the ill they doe, in respect whereof they are the more worthy of mercy, and more easy to be reformed; If any such, I say, haue fallen, you who are spiritual men, and liue according to spirit, (that is, according to the true and spirituall vnderstanding of the Lawe of God) instruct and informe well such a kinde of sinner as this; and doe it not with sharpenes, & rigour, but with sweetnes and gentlenes both of words, and deedes, wherein true *Benignity* consists. And for

this purpose, let euery one consider himselfe, and reflect well vpon his owne weaknes, and danger, and how subiect he is to fall, as the other did, and peraduenture worse. And from hence he will grow to instruct, and correct others, with the sweetnes of mercy, and *Benignity*, and not with too much rigour, and seuerity; least himselfe also growe both to be tempted, and conquered. This in substance is deliuered by the Apostle; and with great reason he wisheth him who treateth such, as haue fallen into sinne, without mercy and *Benignity*, that he looke well to himselfe, least he be tempted and ouercome. For in very truth it is the punishment, which he deserues, and which ordinarily almighty God inflicts, vpon such as rashly iudge and condemne their neighbour for committing any.

any fault, and as despise him for it, to let them fall into the same sinne. As on the other side, our most piteous Lord, is wont to vse supreme *Benignity* and mercy, towards such others, as vse *Benignity* & mercy towards their weak and imperfect brethren. This did that great and admirable woman *Christina*, with great ponderation and feeling affirme, when shee said; There is no thing in the whole world which doth more moue *Christ* our Lord to vse *Benignity*, and mercy towards men; then to see that themselues are benigne and mercifull towards others; and such *Benignity* and mercy, cannot but leade them on to a happy death, which will deliuer them vp to eternall life.

THE III. CHAPTER.

*Of the Benignity which Christ our
Lord vsed towards the Apostles,
enduring and curing their
defects.*

THis very manner of Benig-
nity, did Christ our Lord vse
towards his blessed Apostles,
whilst he conuersed with them,
in mortall flesh. For during all
that time (which was the space of
three yeares) they were very im-
perfect, and liued in great igno-
rance; and by reason of their
much rudnes, made litle profit of
the great light of doctrine which
was propounded to them, and of
that so admirable example of the
life of Christ our Lord, which
they had before their eyes. Let vs
produce some examples to proue
this.

this truth.

Our Lord had already wrought that illustrious miracle, in the sight of his disciples, *Matt 15* of feeding five thousand men with five loaves of bread; and shortly after, another necessity offering it self, wherein our Lord was pleased to feed foure thousand men with seauen loaves, and hauing already tould his disciples, that he would not permit those trou- pes of men & woemen, to returne home to their houses, till he had fed them; they conceiued it to be a matter of so much difficulty, that (as if it had indeed been im- possible for our Lord to doe) they said, *Where can wee be able to pro- cure in this desert, such a quantity of bread, as would be necessary for the feeding of such a multitude?*

What a great imperfectiō was this in them? and what a strange

B 6

rudenes,

rudenes, and blindenes of heart,
that hauing seen with their owne
eyes, that our Lord had wrought
so many like, and greater mira-
cles then that, they did not yet
beleue, and confide so much in
him, as that with so few loaues,
he was able to feed so much peo-
ple? and especially considering,
that he had declared himselfe to
haue a will to doe it; and that he
had wrought the like in the selfe
same case some few dayes before.
And yet these disciples, making
him answere with so little faith,
and indeed with so little good
manners; our most blessed Lord
did yet treat them with so great
tendernes, and sweernes, that he
blamed, or reprobued them not;
nor shewed himselfe a whit dis-
gusted, or offended, for the little
account, and estimation which
they shewed themselues to haue
of

of his power . . But passing by all this , he asked them how many loaves they had, and they saying that they had seauen, he cōmanded the troupes to sit downe, and he gaue them all to eate of those seauen loaves , and he made the Apostles gather vp seauē baskets full of the ouerplus ; and in this sorte, he did by that action of his let them see their rudenes, and he remoued their ignorance, & settled them faster in their faith. And this was so great a fault in the Apostles , that the confessing and publishing of it themselues, after the coming of the Holy Ghost, was an act of great humility in them ; and the suffering and curing it by our Lord, with so great pittie and mercy , was admirable *Benignity* in him . So saith Saint *Chrysostome* . It is worthy of great admiration , to see the Apostles
so

so great friends to the truth, as that themselves, who wrote the Euangelicall history, would not couer those so great faults of their owne. For it was no little one, that they could so soon forget that miracle, which our Lord had wrought so lately before, in the multiplication of the five loaves of bread. And *Theophylact* addeth thus; It was not reason, that they should so soon haue forgotten that miracle, whereby our Lord had giuen food in the wilderness, to more persons, with fewer loaves of bread. But the disciples, were men very grosse, and of meane vnderstanding; which our Lord permitted to be so, to the end that when afterward wee should finde them so full of discretion, and wisdom, we might know that it was the gift of diuine grace, which caused it. But
their

their ignorance and vntowardnes being so great, as wee see it was, our Lord did not yet rebuke, or reproach them for this fault, but cured it with great *Benignity*; and instructed vs thereby, not to put our selues in choler with ignorant people, nor to be sharpe or wayward towards them, but that we must haue compassion of their ignorance, and instruct them and correct them with charity.

Our Lord did also discover his *Benignity* to the Apostles, in that hauing already wrought that miracle of the seauen loaves; & telling them that they were *to take heed of the leuen of the Pharisees and Saduces*, Matt. 16. Marc. 8. (which signified their euill doctrine and example) they would needes vnderstand as if he had said it, because they were not provided of bread inough for the desert; and
 so

so they were affraid they might want food. And our Lord reprehending this fault in them, which they had added to the former, said in this manner; do you not vnderstand, and remember the five loues of bread, and the five thousand men, which I sustained with the; nor yet the seauē loues, wherewith I fed foure thousand men? And thus reproving them, as much as was necessary, he did it yet in words as gentle, as you haue heard; and with so great sweetnes, as that, together with reprehending them, he excused them; imputing their fault to ignorance and forgetfulness. O admirable *Benignity*, worthy of such a Lord as he, who together with the chastisemēt, giueth comfort; and whilest he speaketh of the fault, he giueth hope of pardon and remedy! So doth Saint Chry-

ostome.

some obserue. Consider the reprehension which he giueth the, all tempered with meekenes; for whilest he reprobues them, he excuseth them; yea & he answereth for the very men whom he reprobueth.

But let vs looke vpon some other examples of this *Benignity*, which *Christ* our Lord did vse towards his disciples. When thus he had answered that rich young man, *Matt. 19.* who said. He had kept the comaundments, *If thou wilt be perfect, goe and sell all that thou hast, and giue it to the poore, and come and follow mee, and thou shalt haue treasure in heauen*, and when the young man was going sad away, because he was very rich, and had not the heart to embrace the counsaile of our Lord, and to make himself poore for the kingdom of heauen; Saint Peter said to:

to our Lord, Behould, o Lord, how
as for vs, Wee haue left all thinges, and
Wee haue followed thee, What therefore
shall be done to vs? What reward
wilt thou bestow on vs? Our Lord
made them this answer; Verily I
say to you, that you who haue followed
mee, shall sit vpon twelue seates, and
thrones, to iudge the twelue Tribes of
Israell; With the Sonne of man, When
he shall sit in the seate of his Maiesty,
at the generall resurrection to a
life of glory. At that day, you shal
haue great authority, and glory,
by raigning with the sone of man,
and iudging the world together
with him.

It was very little, which Saint
Peter and the rest of the Apostles
had left for Christ our Lord; for
they were but a poore company
of fishermen; and that which they
had left (as Saint Chrysostom saith)
was some fishing rod, some net,
and

and some little barke. And although together with these things, they also left whatsoeuer they might growe to haue, yet that also must needes be very little; for in the trade they had, they were neuer able to get much. And all this being so little, and that Saint Peter with so much liberty, and audacity should say to him, Behould, *o Lord, wee haue left all, wee had, for thee,* as if they had left most abundant riches and great hopes; our Lord might with much truth and reason, haue said to Saint Peter: *What grease possessions hast thou left for mee; and what great acts of prowes hast thou performed in my seruice?* And yet he said no such thing; nor did he answere them with any shew of any disdaine or euē disgust, or with little estimation of that which had been left for his sake; but he spake to him
great

in great earnest and with wordes, of much weight and with shew of great estimation of that which they had left, and of that which they had performed in following him; and he declared that most high reward of glory & that most eminent dignity which he would giue them, in the kingdome of heauen.

By this answer, *Christ* our Lord did shew extreme *Benignity*, partly by making so great account of such a trifle as his disciples had left for his sake; and promising such a soueraigne reward for such a sleight seruice as they had performed in following him; and partly by shewing how greatly he loued them, who then had laboured so little for him; and by esteeming them so much, who were so meane, and poore, as to promise to exalt them to so great dig-

dignity, and to giue them a seate of so great Maiesty; and by answering them in words so serious, so sweet, so full of comfort; and which gaue them such a height of hope. So saith *Origen*. Saint *Peter* asked what reward he would giue him for what he had left, as if he had performed things of mighty difficulty. But although the things which he & his brother left were little, in the account of the world; yet in the sight of God who regarded the loue, and great good will wherewith they were left, they were much esteemed. This is the most benigne & sweet condition of *Christ* our Lord, and our God; who beholderh the seruices which are done him, and the good will men haue to serue him, & their holy desire to please him, and that grace which he liberally bestoweth for the doing of

of them; and therefore doth he recompence little works, with most high and euerlasting rewardes.

Our Lord, *Io. 11.* whilest he was in the desert, hauing heard the message of *Lazarus* his sicknes, and two daies passing on, after he had heard it; and now vnderstanding that *Lazarus* was dead, he said resolutely; *Let vs goe yet once againe into Iudea;* for *Bethania* was seated in that Prouince. But his disciples answered him after this manner, *Master, it is but the other day, since the Iewes were ready to stone thee in Iudea, and doest thou thinke of going backe, Where there is so much danger?* And our Lord saying still, *let vs goe yet againe into Iudea,* and they seeing his resolution and being full of apprehension and feare of death, *Thomas* said to the rest of the Apostles, *Well then, let vs goe, and dy with him.*

Now

Now the Apostles hauing known by so many experiments, that our Lord knew the secrets of mēs hearts, and that his enemies hauing a minde to take and stone him, were not able to touch him, *because he had all power in his hands;* and hauing heard him say many times, *that in all thinges he performed the Will, and good pleasure of his eternall Father;* they ought to haue beleeued, that if our Lord went into Iudea, it was most conuenient thnt he should doe so; and that he knew very well whatsoeuer was to happen to him there; & that if he should haue a minde to free himselfe from his enemies, they could fasten no hurte vpon him; and that themselues going in his company, might hould themselues secure inough; and that without his will, they could receiue no harme; and that
they

they ought to make themselves wholly subiect to that will of his. But they forgetting all this and distrusting his power and protection, would haue hindred his going into Iudea, and would needes haue dissuaded him from the resolution which he had taken in that behalfe; as if he had been either ignorant of the danger which there he might incurre, or impuissant in defending himselfe from the same; and they were full of apprehension and feare, as if our Lord had not been able to protect them.

And these defects of theirs being so great, our most merciful Lord was not yet offended with them; nor did he shew any disgust, nor did he reprove them with sharpe wordes, for the meane conceit which they had of him; but he informed them in sweet termes,
that

that there was no danger in his journey, and that they might hold themselves safe in his company, by saying thus to them; *Are there not perhaps twelve houres in the day? He who goes by day, stumbles not, because the day light lets him see the way; but he who walks by night, may stumble and fall, because he seeth not the light.* Whereby he would let the know, that iust as, whilest the naturall day lasteth, which hath twelve houres of light, it is not in the skill or power of any creature to take away or diminish any one of these houres, or any part thereof; and that during this time, a man may walke securely without stumbling or falling; iust so, as long as that time of his life was to last in this world, which had been determined by the will of his eternall Father, in which time he was to illuminate the

C

world

world with his doctrine, and by his miracles, there was no cause for them to feare; for that all the power of the world was not able to take one moment of that time from him; and that so both himselfe, and al they of his company, were very safe. With this *Benignity* did he tolerate their boldnes, and cure their rudenes, and their want of that faith, and confidence, which they ought to haue had in our Lord.

THE IV. CHAPTER.

Of other examples of that Benignity, which our Lord vsed towards his disciples; enduring their imperfections, and sweetly curing their ignorances, and other defects.

THe two brothers Saint James, and Saint Iohn, came to Christ our

Of Benignity. Chap. 4. 51

our Lord, *Matt. 10. Luc. 22.* to
demaund at his hands, the two
prime dignities of his kingdome;
and herein they serued them sel-
ues of the intercession of their
mother. Now the rest of the Apo-
stles, seeing the pretenſion of
theſe two, grew into indignation
againſt them, and were offended
and troubled much, to ſee that
they would offer to outſtrip all
the reſt; and it moued a ſtrife
amongſt them, to know which of
all the company was to be the
greateſt in the ſchoole, and king-
dome of *Chriſt* our Lord. Theſe
faults of the Apoſtles, being ſo
worthy of reprehénſion; for faultes
they were (as wee haue declared
elſewhere) in ſome of them, of
ambition, & in the reſt of enuy;
and ſuch faultes in men who had
been ſo long aduiſed, and inſtru-
cted by the doctrine, and exam-

ple of *Christ* our Lord, which was euer preaching, and perswading humility and charity, did well deserue to make our Lord offended with them, & that he should reprove them after a serious and sharpe manner, & that he should punish the seuerely: yet our most meeke Lord, hauing compassion of their ignorance and rudenes, which was the roote from whence those faultes did spring, vsed so great *Benignity* towards them, and cured their defects, with so great sweernes, that as for the two, with onely looking vpon them, and giuing them answer to that petition, which their mother had presented, he made them see that fault into which they had fallen, by making their mother their intercessour for that suit, and by desiring to couer vnder the piety of a mother the inordinate appetite which

which they had to be preferred before the rest ; and with onely saying ; *You know not what you aske* , he corrected and cured all the ambition which they had ; and so reprehending their fault , he did withall , excuse them by imputing it , not to malice , but to the ignorance of men , who knew not what was best for themselves . And as for the other ten , he reformed them also by calling them to him , & aduertising them , that to desire commaund , and aduantage ouer others , was the vice of Gentiles , who lodged not their heart vpon heauely but on earthly thinges ; and that they were not to doe so , but to imitate their Lord and Master , who came into this world , not to be serued by men but to serue them , yea and to giue his life for them .

With this *Benignity* , *Christ* our

C 3

Lord

Lord did tolerate, and cure those so great defects of his disciples. So saith *S. Chrysostome*. As those two Apostles did obey the inordinate appetite of flesh & blood and did beg of our Lord, the two chief seates in his kingdome; so also the other ten, obeying the like euill inclination of flesh and blood, were offended and afflicted by the demaund, and pretension of the former two. For it was ill done by the two, to desire to be preferred before the rest; and the rest, conceiued it to be an affront to them, that the two should be preferred before them. And *Saint Hierome* addeth; That our Lord, who was al meeke and and humble, did not sharply reprehend that inordinate apperite of honour, wherewith those two came to him; nor yet the indignation and enuy, which the ten

con-

Of Benignity. Chap. 4. 55

conceiued against the two; but he treated them, and instructed the, and cured them all with supreme Benignity, and meeknes.

The Apostles being in the garden, with our Lord, the night of his Passiō, he admonished them to remaine watchfull in prayer, least otherwise, they might fall into that temptation, & tribulation, which was cōming towards them. But they, the while, laid themselves to sleepe; and our Lord hauing been at Prayer, and going to visit them, and finding that they were fallen a sleepe, did with them a second time, to watch and pray; and he said; Why sleepe you? rise vp to watch, and pray, least els you be overcome by temptation. And hauing giuen them this lesson, he returned againe to Prayer, and after went to see them a second time: and finding them asleepe yet againe, he said nothing to
C 4 them.

them. A third time he went to Prayer; and a third time he went to see them; and finding them still sleeping, as being oppressed by the great sorrow they had, he said to them, *leepe on, and take your rest.* And so he left them for a while, till the time was come, when his enemies who were to apprehend him, were approaching. Then he turned towards them & said; *It is enough: rise vp, let vs goe; for the hower is already come, wherein the Sonne of mā, is to be deliuered ouer, into the hands of sinners.*

This was a great defect in the disciples, because they were aduertised, of the much danger wherein they were to see themselves that night; and they had promised, that they would giue their life for our Lord; and they had been warned by him, two seuerall times in words of great exaggeration.

aggeration, and waight, that they should *watch and pray*, because they were to be tempted in a grievous manner; and their prayer was to be the meanes, for their not being overcome by that temptation. And yet notwithstanding all this, they neither watched, nor prayed; and they suffered themselves to be overcome by sleepe, which was the cause, why afterward being overcome by the temptation, they fled all away for feare, at the time when our Lord was apprehended, and they denied their Master, who was the head and crowne of them all. But yet our Lord did suffer, and passe by, & seeke to reforme this so great defect with so great *Benignity*, that finding the asleepe the first time, he corrected them with no other then these gentle wordes; *Why sleepe you? Whereby*

he would giue them to vnderstand, how vaine that confidence was, which they had reposed in their owne strength, making a promise that they would giue their life for their Lord; whereas the while, they had not the strength to watch and pray during that little time. And when he went to visit them the second time, and perceiued them to be ouercome by sleepe, through the great weaknes, and frailty of imperfect men, he dissembled the seeing it, and hauing compassion of their infirmity, did not reprehend them, nor so much as speake a word, nor wake them, but still let them sleepe. And the third time, returning to them, & seing the difficulty they had to overcome their sleepe, in regard of their much sorrow, he did not onely passe it ouer, but expressly gaue

gaue them leaue to repose and rest, whilest he was watching, and praying, and sweating blood for them. With this so admirable *Benignity*, and so full of the deernes, and sweetnes of loue, did *Christ* our Lord treat his disciples, and tolerate their defects, and endure the trouble they gaue him; and he remoued their ignorances and cured their faults.

THE V. CHAPTER.

How wee are to imitate this Benignity of Christ our Lord.

THis *Benignity* must wee vse towards our neighbours, in imitation of *Christ* our Lord; and especially it must be done by Superiours towards their Subiects, by Teachers towards their Schollers, by Masters towards their

Seruant and slaues, and by Parents towards their children. First they must exercise this *Benignity* by enduring their imperfections, negligences and faults; not suffering themselves to be overcome by wrath, to wish them any euill, or to curse them, or giue them inuiurious words, or any other word of reuenge. And to this exteriour patiēce, they must add the sweetness of *Benignity*, in such sorte, as that it may be a benigne kinde of sufferance, which springeth from the interiour sweetness of *Charity*. To this did Saint *Chrysostome* admonish vs, who vpon those words of Saint Paul, *Charity is patient, & it is benigne*, discourseth thus; There are some who haue patience, but they doe not vse it as they ought; for although in the exteriour, they are silent, and dissemble the cause of their disgust, yet they doe

doe it with a kinde of bitternes of heart, yea and they shew some exterior vntowardnes, and vnder-
 ualue of their neighbour; and so they grow to offend, and prouoke to further wrath, euen those very persons, whom they were resolved to tolerate. This kinde of patience is not agreeable to charity which is benigne, and vseth to suffer with gentlenes and sweetness both exterior & interior; and whilest it is suffering, doth not prouoke a mans neighbour to encrease of anger, but rather doth mitigate, and appease it. For we must not be content to tolerate the faultes of our neighbours, after a superficial manner; but whilest wee be suffering, wee must also admonish and comfort them; and thus shall we cure that wound of wrath, which they may haue in their hearts. Saint Chryso-

stome

Some declareth; that this is to suffer with *Benignity*.

Superiors also who haue charge of others, must exercise this *Benignity*; prouiding all thinges necessary both for their bodies and soules: for their bodies, giuing them food, cloathing, physicke in their sicknes, ease in their labours, and comfort in their troubles; to the end that they may beare them with contentment: and for their soules also by giuing them doctrine, counselle: spirituall consolation, and good example, which may edify them. This doe Prelates owe to their Subiects; Lords to their Seruants and slaues; and fathers to their children. *Benignity* I say, doth require, that Superiours make prouision of all thinges necessary, both for the body and soule, of all such as are vnder their

their charge, not sparingly & miserably, nor with disgust and bitterness, and vexation of the inferiours; but sufficiently, and plentifully, according to the necessity of the inferiour, & to the ability and meanes of the Superiour; and that they doe it with facility, and suauity, and with comfort to the inferiour. For to this is the office and charge of a Superiour ordeined; not for the honour, & ease, and temporall comfort of the Superiour; but for the remedy & benefit of the inferiour, whom he hath in charge. So saith Saint Augustine; Wee who are Superiours, and Pastors of others, haue two capacities; the one, in that we are Christians; the other, in that we are Superiours, and rulers. Our being Christians, makes for our selues; and vnder that capacity, we are to looke to our owne profit,

fit, and good: but our being Superiours, is for the vse of others; and for the complying with this duty, wee must procure their benefit whom wee haue in charge. This is deliuered by Saint *Augustine*. And although it be true, that the Superiour, as he is a Superiour, is not to looke so carefully to his owne temporall profit, as to that of his subiect, yet doing that which he ought in his office, and complying with them whom he hath vnder his charge, he doth also negotiate his owne profit, & dispatcheth his owne businesse best, since he purchaseth spirituall and eternall benedictions thereby.

All Superiours must also exercise this *Benignity*, by imposing the burdens of their employments, and commaundements, in such sorte, as that the inferiours may
be

be able to carry them on, with comfort. Let them measure out the labours, the businesse, and the offices wherewith they will charge their subiects, by the strength, and talents of euery one of them; to the end that they may not carry them with deepe sighes, nor be forced to faint vnder the; but that they may be able to discharge them with a cheerfull and contented heart. And let them moderate their directions and commaundments, whereby they rule and gouerne, according to the capacity and talent of the inferiours; that so they disposing themselves to obey, and to doe their duties, may performe them with facility, and profit of their soules. So saith Saint *Chrysostome*; If thou wilt proceed like a man who indeed is holy, be austere and rigorous towards thy selfe, and benigne

nigne and pitteous towards others; and let men see, and heare it said of thee, that thou commaundest others to doe thinges which are light, and easy, to be performed; and that thy selfe vndergoest heauy, and performest hard thinges.

As for that which concerneth the chastisement and correction of inferiours, the vertue of *Benignity* doth not teach, that they should not be corrected: for this vertue is not contrary either to that of *Iustice*, or to that of *Charity*; both which oblige Princes that they should correct, & chastise their vassailes; Lords and Masters their seruants, & slaues; parents their children. For, the Apostle saith of that Superiour, who gouerneth the cōmōwealth. It is not in vaine that he hath power and authority to punish;
as

as we see by the sword he carrieth; but it is giuen him vpon great cause and reason, and for a great good vse; for he is the Minister of God, for the punishment of such as doe ill, and for the execution of iustice vpon their persons. That which *Benignity* doth teach and exact is this; that since correctiō, and punishment is necessary, and most important for the generall good of the commonwealth, and for the particular members thereof; which is, to the end that they who are faulty, may amend; and the rest may feare punishment, and take warning by others, it must be executed with that moderation & sweetnes, which may carry most proportiō to this end, as Christ our Lord hath taught vs by his example.

This moderation & sweetnes, consisteth in that; when the inferiours

riours commit small faultes, the Superiours doe not exaggerate, and enforce them too much, nor correct them with too grieuous punishments; but that they moderate their wordes and deedes, according to the fault. So saith Saint *Dorotheus*; Be not too great, nor too seuerer a punisher of faultes, and defects, which are not great. And so also, when faultes are committed through ignorāce, or through great weakenes, or vpon some vehement temptatiō, and not with malice; obserue that moderation, in making the reprehension and inflicting the punishment, as that you affront not the offender, with ill wordes; but that the paine he is to suffer, may lessen, according to the ignorāce and weaknes, wherewith the fault was made.

And sometimes when the person

son, who sinned through ignorance or passion, is such as that of himselfe he growes to know his fault, and hath much compunction for it; and doth cordially put himselfe vpon amendment, and that noe hurt or ill example of others groweth by it; the vertue of *Benignity* dorth require, that the punishment be remitted, or moderated at least, very much. So saith Saint Gregory; Some faultes are to be punished very gently; for when men sinne not by malice, but by ignorance, or weakenes, it is necessary that the correction and punishment, be tempered with great moderation. And in another place; as the fault of them, who sinne by ignorance, may be tolerated in some sorte, so they who commie it wittingly, and wilfully, must be seuerely punished. And that it
is

is more conuenient to pardon a fault sometimes, then to inflict punishment, the Venerable *Bede* doth affirme saying; Not allwaies are they to be punished, who offend; for, sometimes clemency doth more good, both to the Superiour for the exercise of his patience, and to the inferiour for his amendment. When faultes are great, & vnexcusable by any ignorance, and that it be necessary to inflict due punishment; that which *Benignity* requires, is, that the Superiour who correcteth and punisheth, be not moued to it by anger and passion; but that in his heart, he haue pittie of the delinquent, and that he commit no excesse in punishing; but that he temper, and moderate it in such sorte, as that it may not seeme cruelty, or too much rigour: for els he who correcteth,

recteth and punisheth, will receive more hurt, by his owne passion, and the excesse which he useth, then he who is punished will receive good. So doth *Saint Gregory* advise, speaking to a Superiour. Let such as are good, finde by experience that thou art sweet towards them; and let such as are euill, finde by experience, that thou hast zeale in correcting, and punishing their faults. In which punishment, thou art to obserue this order, that thou loue the person, and that thou abhorre and persecute the vice; procuring that the vice may be destroyed, & that the person may be amended, and preserved; and according to this, let the punishment be moderated in such sorte, that it reach not soe farre, as to proue cruelty; & so thou happen to hurt, and to loose him, whom
thou

thou desirest to amend, & keepe.

And to the end that the correction & punishment may be imposed with that moderatiō which *Benignity* requires, let the Superior procure, that he do it not, whilest he findes himselfe angry, and altered, or enflamed with choler; but let him stay, till his heart be calme and quiet. And before he punish, or reprove, let him lift vp his heart to God, and desire fauour and grāce from heauen; to the end that he may do it with such moderation as is fit; and to such end as he ought; which is, that the delinquēt may amend, and so others may take warning by his example, & that the diuine Maiesty may be serued and glorified by all. This doth *S. Dorotheus* declare to vs, by these wordes. Our Predecessors & forefathers, the holy men, did teach
vs,

vs, that if any Superiour being in anger, did reprehend his subject chollerickely; in such sorte, as reprehending the other, he satisfied his owne passion & anger, it did amount to be a kinde of reuenge; and he discovered the vioulnes of his owne heart, whereby he disedified them, whom he was to reforme. And for this reason it is fit, that first he bridle his owne choler, and be wholly in the hands of reason, before he punish other folkes.

All this moderation, which is necessary to the end that correction, and punishment be imposed with *Benignity*, the Apostle teacheth vs, speaking thus to his disciple Saint *Timothy*; *Argue*, (that is to say conuince such as erre, with reasons and authorities) *and entreate the also*. Which is as much as to say, admonish the good by
D
way

way of request, and in sweet manner, to the end that they may profit; & such others as are weake, and pusillanimous, to the end that they may get vp into heart; and reprehend and correct the wicked, with seruour & zeale; but yet this you must doe, with much patience. In a word, you must correct such as are faulty, without shewing your selfe angry, or in passion; but let them see, that you haue a calme, and quiet heart.

THE VI. CHAPTER.

Of the Benignity Which Christ our Lord did vse, in touching sicke and leprous persons, with his owne sacred hands.

IT belōgeth to *Benignity*, to shew the sweetnes of loue, in life and conuersation with men. And a
great

great sweetnes of loue it is, that a man placed in dignity should drawe neere to a poore sicke person full of soares, & should speak to him in most amiable manner; and should touch his soares, and clense them, and cure them, and comfort him with such a regalo as this would bee. And so much more eminent as that Lord were, who should descēd to this office; & so much more base as the sicke person were, and so much the more horrible as his disease were, and so much the more often, and so many more as the sicke persons were; to whom he should vse this charity; so much the greater, and so much the more admirable would this sweetnes of condition, and *Benignity* fall out to be.

Well then, all this was done by *Christ* our Lord, who being the Kinge both of heauen and earth,

and the Lord of infinite Maieſty,
did touch with his owne bleſſed
hands, thoſe poore baſe perſons,
who were ſicke of horrible diſea-
ſes; and who came to him with
deſire of remedy; and he cured
them, and left them full of com-
fort; and this he did many times,
and to innumerable perſons. S.
Luke, and *Saint Marke* relate, how
our Lord beginning to preach in
Galilea, after his faſt in the deſerr,
came to the Citty of *Caphernaum*;
and being gone forth to preach
in a *Sinagogue*, and the euening
being already come on, all they
who had ſicke perſons in their
power, brought them before him.
And thoſe ſicke people, being
many. *Marke 1. Luke 4* and their
diſeaſes of many kindes, (for they
came from ſeueral parts of that
Prouince, to hunt after their
health by his meanes) he touched
euery

euery one of them with his owne sacred hands, and gaue them perfect health; the whole Citty, the while, standing amazed at that wonder, to see how he touched them one by one, and how instantly withall, they were cured.

Hauiing once preached a sermō in the Mount, he descended towards the plaine, *Matth. 8. Mark, 1.* and there came many troupes of people to him. Amongst the rest, there approached a mā all loaden with leprousy; and in the presence of al that multitude of people, he placed himselfe vpon his knees, before our Lord, (but a litle separated from him,) and besought him to cure him of that leprousy, saying. *O Lord if thou wilt, thou canst make mee whole.* Now our Lord could haue cured him with the least word; yet, not cōtēting himself with that, but to the

that he might shew the more *B*
nignity, he extended his hand so
farre as to reach him, and touch
his leprous body, saying, *I will,*
be thou cleane; and instantly he was
cured.

After the mystery of the *T*
ransfi-
guration, *Matth. 17 Marke 9.* there
came troupes of people who were
expecting him, and they brought
a lunaticke before him, who
was extremely tormented by a
diuell. Our Lord commaunded
the diuel to depart, who yet at his
going out, did treate the young
man so ill, as that he fell to the
ground like a dead body. And
whereas our Lord could easily
haue cōmaunded him to rise vp,
or els appoint one of his disciples
to raise him, he did not so; but
himselfe went towards the young
man, and tooke him by the hand,
and raised him vp; and then the
young

young man being touched, and assisted by our Lord, who sustained him in his handes, did rise.

Whilest he was in *Bethsaida, Marc.* 8. they brought a blind mā to him that he might cure him, which he would not doe in the Citty before that people, but abroad in the field. And when he might haue commaūded them, who led him, to conduct him forth of the Citty, he was not pleased to serue himselfe of any other in that office; but himselfe would needes take the poore blinde man by the hand, and drew him aside into a part of the field out of the company, and himselfe lead him, and became his guide, and to cure him laid his hand vpon his eyes, and to discover his *Benignity* to vs, he vouchsafed himselfe in person, to be the leader of a poore blinde man, which is a worke of

so much humility and meannes.
Not onely did he vse this kinde
of *Benignity* with men, but also
poore sicke woemen. The mother
in-lawe of Saint *Peter*, *Matth. 8.*
Marc. 1. was sicke of a violent fea-
uer. He went into her house to vi-
sit her, he drew neer her, he tooke
her by the hand, and he raised her
vp, commaunding the feauer to
forsake her: so might he haue cō-
maunded her to rise alone, but he
would not do so, but would needs
raise her vp himselve, to discouer
his *Benignity* so much the more.

Our Lord being preaching in
a Sinagogue one Saboth day,
Luke 13. there came before him, a
sicke & miserable creature, bow-
ed crookedly downe euen to the
ground, and tormented by a di-
uell; and our most pitteous Lord
called her gently to him, & made
her come neer him, and laid his
hands

hands vpon her with great Benignity, and gaue her perfect health.

That which our Lord did with these sicke and miserable persons, whereof wee haue spoken, he did at other times, with other innumerable sicke people, who were subiect to horrible and loathsome diseases, for all the world came to him. And they who were so weake and wasted, that they could not come of theselues, were brought to him by others, & so they drew neer him, and he touched them with his most blessed hands to cure them. Now that our Lord himselfe, should raise sicke persons out of their beds, or from the ground, to which they were fallen, did proceed in him, from an vnspokeable and most tender loue, who not onely was disposed to doe men good, but also to comfort, honour, and regale such persons.

sons as he did good vnto: which was a fruite of the supreme sweetnes of his *Benignity* and loue.

THE VII. CHAPTER.

*How the Saints haue imitated this
Benignity of Christ our Lord to-
wards sicke persons.*

THis example of Christ our Lord, hath generally been imitated much by holy men who thereby haue been moued, & animated to serue sicke persons, and to cure them, and to raise them in their armes, and to clense them with their owne hands. And this hath been done, not onely by meane persons, but by principall and great Lord; who not being content with giuing almes to poore sicke people, and to main-
teine them by their bounty, haue
them.

themselves, been glad to serue them, and strue to cure them, sometimes being sicke of lepro-
sies, and other most loathsome & corrupt soares; and haue with ex-
treme *Benignity*, done all imagi-
nable offices of charity and ten-
dernes, yea euē so farre as to kisse
their leprosies, and soares. And to
the end that God might declare
how much this tender, and be-
nigne kinde of charity was plea-
sing to him, he did oftentimes
concurre, by miraculously curing
those sicke persons, who had been
touched by his seruants. Let vs
relate some examples of this
truth.

Saint *Lewis* Kinge of France,
vsed to visit the hospitalls, where
there was a great number of per-
sons sicke of diseases, both grie-
uous, and dangerous, and ex-
treamely loathsome withall; and

yet the King, without loathing that vncleanes, & the horreur of their diseases, and without any feare also of contagion, would go to the sicke, and would be seruing them vpon his knees, and regaling them with extreame *Benignity*. And this he performed with so great cheerfullnes, and estimation of this office, as if visibly he had beheld the person of *Christ* our Lord, in euery one of those poor people. And finding on day a leaper, whose nose, & whose very eyes were eaten out, with the leprousy, & who was become euen abominable to all that saw him; to this man he vsed extraordinary tendernes, and gaue particular regales, and serued him vpon his knees, putting the meat into his mouth, with his owne hands, and giuing him the wine & water which he was to drinke.

The

The Count *Elzearus* of Ariano had euery day in his house twelue Leapers, & he washed their feet, and gaue them meate; and not content with what he did in his owne house, he went to the hospitalls, where they liued; and there putting himselfe vpon his knees before them, he would wash their feet, and kisse and clense and tie vp their soares. One day in the hospital he found six leapers, and some of them had their lips, and mouthes so eaté, that they could not be looked vpon, without hor- rour; and the holy Count went to them, and comforted them by word of mouth; and afterward kissed the soares of euery one of them; and this charity was so acceptable to God, that instantly they were all cured, and the house was filled with a most fragrant odour. Not onely did *Christ* our Lord:

Lord approue this worke, by curing those leapers, who had been touched by his seruāt, but himself also was pleased to appeare to him in forme of a leper, that so he might receiue the same seruice, and regalo, which was afforded to the rest.

Surius relateth in the life of Saint *Ethbinus*, the Abbor, whose feast is celebrated vpon the 19. of October, that another holy Priest going with him by the fieldes to his Monastery, they encountred in the way, a poore leper all full of soares, and deeply groaning vpon the ground, where he was laid. They came to him, & comforted him, and hauing much compassion of his misery, they asked him what he would haue? and offered him all the seruice they could performe, although it were to giue him of their very flesh.

flesh. The leper said, the thinge which I desire of you, is that because my nose is so full of corruption and filth, you would asswage my grief, by making it cleane. They doe soe; and *Ethbinus* takes him in his armes, and raiseth him vp from the ground, and the Priest comes; & clenserh the corruption of his sore with his toung. In that very instant, wherein they beganne this worke of so great Charity, and Benignity, there appeared Angels from heauen close by the leaper, and there appeared also a Crosse, which was placed ouer his head; and the leaper rose vp whole, all full of splendor, and beauty; and they saw cleerly that it was *Christ* our Lord. And when he was a little mounted vp, he said. Ye were not ashamed of mee, in my afflictions; neither will I be ashamed to confesse you, and

and to admit you as my seruants, in my kingdome; and when this was spoken he vanished, and ascended vp to heauen. The two Saints were amased, and full of mighty ioy, and could not satisfie themselues with praising God, for the great fauor he had shewed them, by appearing in the forme of an poore sicke man; and for vouchsafing to receaue that poor service at their hand, and to reward that with so great bounty as to giue them an assured hope, that they should enioy him in his kingdome.

There haue also been many Queenes; and great Ladies, in the Church of Christ our Lord, who haue imitated his *Benignity*, towards sicke persons. *Fortunatus* the Bishop, relates of *Radegundis* the holy Queene of Frãce (whose feast is celebrated in August) that
shee

shee made an Infirmarie, into which she gathered, and wherein shee cured a great multitude of sicke persons, and shee her selfe would serue them; and licke the corruption of their soares & euen the wormes which grew therein, and she would clense their heads, & cut their haire. And especially she did this to leprous woemen, whom she would embrace, and kisse, and anoint, and cure, and serue at table, with great sweetnesses of loue.

The Queen *Donna Isabel*, daughter to *Don Pedro* King of Arragon, and neece of *S. Isabell*, daughter of the King of Hungary, who was married to *Don Dionysio* King of Portugall, and who for her sanctity, is publikely reputed and serued in Portugall as a Saint by leaue of Pope *Leo*, did not content herselfe to giue all the goods she

she had to poore people, who were sicke; but shee herselfe would be seruing and curing them, in her owne person. And for this purpose, she would cause both men and woemen who were sicke of loathsome infirmities, as soares, and leprosies and cankers, to be sought forth, & secretly brought into her Palace, and there shee cleansed, and cured and serned, and regaled them with all the expressions of piete, that she could make; & she would kisse the feet, & the soares of the leproous woemen. One day washing the feet of a woman who was leproous, the woman hid one of them, because it had been much eaten with the canker and there distilled forth corrupt matter, which gaue a most loathsom saour. The Queē made one of her woemen draw forth the leproous foote, & put it
in

in a basen, that she might wash it. When this was done, there came such a pestiferous saour from that foote, that the Queenes women, not being able to endure it, went all out of the roome. The Queene remaining alone with the leaper, did gently touch the foote with her hand, for feare of hurting it, and she cleāsed it; and stooping kist it with that horrible sore which it had. And *Christ* our Lord being pleased to discover how much gust he taketh in such workes of piety, did entirely cure the leaper at the instant, when the Queene kist her foote.

Now wee also are to imitate *Christ* our Lord, and his Saints, in this sweet and benigne kind of charity, towards poore sicke persons; and wee must visit them in their houses, and hospitalls, and infirmaries, and wee must serue
and

and cleanse, and cure and cōfort them, and prouide them, the best wee may, of all things necessary. And howsoeuer wee may be placed in great height of nobility, and dignity, yet must we not disdain to affoord such seruices & regales to poore sicke people; since this was done by *Christ* our Lord, who is the King of glory; and many Christian Kings and Queenes, haue done the same for loue of him. And it is a great honour and glory for vs to be able to do a worke so acceptable, and pleasing to *Christ* our Lord, and so profitable to our owne soules, and of so great edification and good example to our neighbours and which hath the assurance of so immense a reward in the kingdom of heauen.

THE

THE VIII. CHAPTER.

Of the Benignity Which Christ our Lord did vse to diuers blinde men; hearkning to them, expecting them, and illuminating them, and how wee are to imitate him in this Benignity.

IT doth also belong to this vertue of Benignity, to giue that to ones neighbour, which he desireth, with facility and sweetness; yea and more then that which he desireth; and not to reflect vpon the indignity of him who asketh, nor vpon the authority & greatness of that Lord, who may need the like; but to consider what is agreeable to charity, which whensoever it is great, it communiceth it selfe to all, and doth good to all, and taketh order that in many things, the high and lowe,
the

the great and little men of the world, be made equall to one another.

Christ our Lord left vs many examples of this truth. Saint Luke chap. 18. relateth how once coming to the Citty of Iericho, a blinde man neer the way was asking almes; and when he heard the noise of the people in company of our Lord, and vnderstood that it was Iesus of Nazareth, who passed by, he began to cry out and say, *Iesus thou sonne of David, haue mercy on me.* And although the people bad him hould his peace, yet still he continued in crying out, and beseeching our Lord that he would free him from the misery wherein he was. Our Lord heard his cry, and deteined himselfe in the high way, and made all that people which was in his company stay with him, and commaunded that they

they should bring the blind begger to him, and he stayed expecting till he came; & being come, he asked him this question; *What wouldest thou haue mee doe for thee? What dost thou desire at my hands?* The blinde man answered; the thing which I desire and beg of thee, is that thou wilt giue mee my sight: and instantly our Lord, without the least delay, gaue him that which he desired, and said; *Receiue thy sight.* And he received the sight of his corporall eyes, & the sight also of his soule; for being full of faith, and deuotion he followed *Christ* our Lord, both with body and soule; and did not cease from glorifying Almighty God. This passed at the entry which *Christ* our Lord made into Iericho, for Saint *Luke* relates that he entred into Iericho, after he had wrought this miracle.

Saint

Saint Matthew also chap. 20.
shewes, that Christ our Lord
going forth of the same Citty of
Iericho, and being accompanied
with much people; there stood
two blinde men, close vpon the
way; demaunding almes; & when
they knew that Iesus passed by,
they began to cry out and say,
Iesus the sonne of Dauid, take pittie on
vs. Christ our Lord did instantly
make a stand in the way, and cau-
sed them to be called to him; and
being arriued he asked the thus,
what do you aske at my hands?
They answered, *Lord that thou open*
these eyes of ours, and take this
blindenes from vs; and at the in-
stant our Lord extended his hand
to their eyes, and they obtained
sight both of body and soule; and
they followed our Lord, being
full of gratitude for so great a be-
nefit, and of faith, and desire to
doe

doe him seruice.

Much is here to be considered in the admirable *Benignity*, which *Christ* our Lord did vse towards these blind men; in that he would hearken to their cries; and they, being so base persons, and our Lord so soueraignely high, that he would yet pawse in the way, & stay for them, and make all them also stay, who went with him; and condescend thereby to the necessity of those blinde men, and accomodate himself to their weakness. For if our Lord had gone walking on, they not seeing the way could not haue followed him, or at least, not fast enough to ouertake him; & he must haue giuen them much trouble in putting them to it. That way of *Iericho*, was also full of impediments and dangerous precipices, as *Saint Hierome* notes; and so if

B

they

they had been put to goe a pace in such a way, they had been in danger to receiue much hurt. For these reasons did our Lord make a stand; as also because he would vouchsafte to doe them honour, making so much accoūt of them, as for their respect to stay in that high way; and to make so much people stay with him. And besides, it was a great testimony of his *Benignity* towardses them, to graunt them at the instant of their asking it; and that with so much comfort to them, so great a benefit, as it was to receiue their sight, both in body and soule, and such deuotion, as carryed the on to glorify Almighty God.

A great wonder it was, that *Iosue* should cause the *Sunne* to stand still, and make a pawse in the heauen, to illuminate the earth, till such time as he had obtained

tained victory ouer his enemies;
and that the *Sunne* and all the
Orbes, which moued with it,
should stand still, obeying the
voice of *Iosue*, the seruant of God.
But a much greater wonder it is,
that our Lord who created both
the *Sunne*, and the whole machine
of the world, should make a stand
in the way, obeying the voice of
a blinde begger, that he might il-
luminat him both in body and
soule, as the true *Sunne* of Iustice.

A great *Benignity* it is, that a
Kinge of any earthly kingdome
passing on his way through a
street, should stay and make all
the Grâdes of his Court stay with
him, vpon the cry of a begger,
who asketh almes; and that he
should expect that begger till he
could arriue; and should giue au-
dience to his perion; and then in-
stâtly, open a purse with his owne
E 2 hands,

hands, and giue the begger what soeuer almes he had desired. But a farre greater *Benignity* it is, that the King of heauen and earth should deteine himselfe in a high way, and stand expecting a poore begger, till he could arriue to him, and then should aske him what he would desire to the end that his owne mouth might be the measure of that which our Lord would giue him; and that instantly he should open the treasures both of his mercy & power, and bestow all that almes vpon him which he could aske or desire, yea and much more then he knew how to aske.

Now our Lord by shewing this mercy to those blinde men, hath shewed also a very great mercy to all faithfull Christians, instructing vs and perswading vs by his example, to vse *Benignity* towards
our

our neighbours, giuing care to the cry of the poore, and bestowing with liberality, what they aske according to the ability wee haue: and that when they are not able to come to vs, to aske remedy as being hindred, either by infirmity or ignorance, or any other weakenes, wee goe to seeke them out, or make the be sought; to the end that wee may helpe them, accomodating our selues to their impotēcy, and necessity. And teaching vs also by this example, that wee must expect, and stay for our neighbours, when there is occasiō to do them good, and to giue them comfort; and that although wee may be placed in high estate, and they in lowe, wee must not yet disdain to vse this charity, and sweetness towards them. And that when our neighbours make vs expect

while, and come not so soone as wee desire; wee must not yet be angry with them, nor loose the peace of our heart; but wee must endure with patience, and expect and speake to them with *Benignity*, in imitation of this example of *Christ* our Lord.

THE IX. CHAPTER.

Of the Benignity Which Christ our Lord shewed to little children; and What he taught vs thereby.

THe parents of little childre,
Matth. 19. Marc. 10. Luc. 18.
 seeing the power which *Christ* our Lord had to cure all diseases by touching sicke persons, brought those little children to him; and not onely them who were able to goe vpon their owne feet, but also
 their

their sucking babes, who could not speake nor goe, but in the armes of others; and they offered the to him, that he might touch them, and giue them his benediction; and they had confidence that by this meanes, such of the as were sicke, would recouer their health, and they who were not sicke, would continue whole. Their parents vsed this very often, and with much importunity, for they who had children were many, and did so much esteeme this good of their children, that no man would want it by his will; and euery one desired to preuent his neighbour, and be the first to get a blessing for his sonne. The Apostles seeing this, and conceiuing that it was a thing vnworthy of the authority and grauity of our Lord, to employ himselve vpon such a light and meane

E 4. thing.

thing as this, and thereby to hinder greater matters; & thinking also, that because the exercise was so frequent, and vsed with so great importunity, and ill manners by those paréts, who brought their children, that our Lord would be troubled and vexed thereby; did vse seuerely to reprehéd such as brought the children; and would shake them off, as threatening them; that so they might not come to our Lord. So saith Saint *Chrysostome*, giuing a reasón therof. The disciples droue away the little children, and forbade them to come to our Lord, in respect of his dignity, and the authority of his person. And S. *Hierome*, declaring another reason saith; The disciples thought, that as other men are wont to be disquieted, and displeased, by such importunities; so also would our Lord.

Lord be, by the frequency and importunity, wherby they offered their children. And Saint *Ambrose* addeth another cause to this, and saith; The disciples also did thus, least otherwise our Lord might haue beene oppressed; that is; much straightened and tired, by the multitude of people, which came to him; some thrustling and iustling others, by occasion of the children whō they brought. Now our Lord perceiuing how the Apostles hindred litle children frō approaching to him, though he knew their zeale, and the intention wherewith they did it, which was not ill; yet he liked it not, because it was not so agreeable to the diuine spirit of the same Lord, but to the humane spirit of the disciples. And shewing both by his countenance and his wordes, that he liked it not, he called &c

E 1

repre-

reprehended them saying ; *Suffer little children to come to mee , and doe not hinder them ; for of such is the kingdome of heauen.* I meane that heauen doth belong , not onely to those little children, for the purity, innocency and grace they haue; but that the same kidgdom of heauen shall be also giuen to men, who in their practise of humility, simplicity, and purity of life, will become like little children. And so for that, which little children are in their owne persons, by diuine grace , which is, to be acceptable to God, & worthy of heauen; and for that also, which they represent in others, namely to be men, who are humble, innocent, and pure, whom I loue and esteem much , and embrace with my very bowells, and blesse with my gifts; therfore will I suffer them to approache to me,
and

and I will admit them to my embracements, and blessings; and therefore see you giue them noe impediment in comming.

Our Lord hauing thus reprehended his disciples, he called them who brought the children; and making those children come neer him, he put his hands vpon their heads; and embraced them, and gaue them his holy blessing with his hands; & with his words he recommended them to his heauenly Father; and he made them partakers of his diuine grace, by the efficacy of his benediction.

By this act, *Christ* our Lord discovered to vs his *Benignity*, and most sweet condition; in that a Lord of so great Maiesty, and who was euer employed in so great and high workes, should descend to a thing, which in all apparance was so poore and meane,

and belonging wholly to men; who had no waighty businesse in hand; and that he should doe it, with so cheerfull a countenance, and with so much gust, and sweetness, that their parents, & others of kinne who brought the children, should presume to bring them so often, and so importunately, and to interrupt the continuance of his discourses, and the working of his miracles; and to employ so large spaces of time, in this so meane exercise.

And not onely did *Christ* our Lord discover his *Benignity* to vs, by this proceeding; but he manifested it to be so great, and so admirable, that it doth incomparably exceed all that, which men can conceiue, and beleue thereof. For although it were much, which the Apostles knew of the *Benignity*, and piety, and meek-
ness.

Of Benignity. Chap. 9. 109

nes of our Lord; yet they could not beleue or vnderstand, how it could possibly arriue so farre as this; but did rather thinke, that our Lord was to disdain such a poore imployment; and that he would be troubled, and offended by the disquiet, and importunity which they gaue him in this kinde. But indeed it was farre otherwise with him; for the meannes of the action pleased him much; and the time it cost, was held by him to be well employed; and the labour & trouble which they put him to, was sweetly, and gladly endured by him.

L^et vs imitate this *Benignity* of our Lord, in descending to doe such thinges as are poore, and meane in the account of men, when charity requires it at our hands; and to treate and conuerse with poore, and meane people, though

though wee may seeme perhaps
to loose somewhat of our right,
and dignity thereby; if yet it doe
import for the assisting, and com-
forting them, in their necessities,
& for gaining them to *Christ* our
Lord, doing that which the Apo-
stle did, in imitation of *Christ*,
when he said, *I haue made my selfe*
all thinges, to all men, I haue accom-
modated my selfe to the inclina-
tion and gusts of all men, in all
lawfull thinges; thereby loosing
somewhat of mine owne right &
liberry, that I might saue as
many as I could.

THE

THE X. CHAPTER.

Of the Benignity Which Christ our Lord shewed towards Wicked persons, who came to him with a corrupt intention.

OVr Lord shewed great Benignity in yeelding so liberally and sweetly to all that, which the persōs, who came to him, desired of him with good intention, and true desire of finding remedy by his meanes; but he discovered it much more, in yeelding liberally to that which was desired of him, with a corrupt minde, and with a meaning to calumniate him, and to draw some word out of his mouth, or to note some action, wherby they might defame him, and condemne him to death.

There came to him a man of
the

the Lawe *Luc.* 10. after a counterfeit manner, to tempt him; and he asked him, *What he was to doe for the obtaining of eternall life?* but our Lord did not discover his treachery, nor reprehended his wickednes, but graunted that which he desired, instructing him with wordes full of sweetnes, concerning the truth of what he was to know and doe, for the obtaining of eternall life.

There came a Pharisee to him, *Matth.* 22. who was learned in the Lawe, to aske him which was the greatest commaundment of the Lawe; and he came, with a malicious minde and not with a desire to vnderstand the truth, but to finde matter, whereof to accuse him. And yet he without shewing any feeling or disgust, either in his countenance, or wordes, did answere to the questiō with much
faci;

Of Benignity. Chap. 10. 113
facility & suauity, and he taught
him the truth.

The Pharisees did often inuite
him to eate with them, *Luc. 7. &
11. Matth. 22.* not with charity, but
with a peruerse and malicious in-
tention; which was to see if he did
or said any thing, which might
be taxed; and finding nothing
whereof they could take hold
wherewith to hurt him, they pro-
cured to serue themselues of his
piety and religiousnes towards
the making good their ill pur-
pose; and therefore they inuited
him vpon their Sabbath daies,
and would place sicke persons be-
fore him; to the end that curing
them vpon the Sabbath, they
might accuse him for not obser-
uing it. And our Lord knowing
the malice, and wicked intention
wherewith they inuited him, did
not yet excuse himselfe from
going.

going; but with great facility
graunted the suite they made, &
accepted their inuitation; and he
went to their houses, and did eate
with them, and comfort them by
his presence, & illuminate them
by his doctrine; and edify them
by his example. And though he
vsed most exact temperance in
eating and drinking; yet to ac-
commodate himselfe to them, &
to shew himselfe affable, and be-
nigne towards them, he fed vpon
those ordinary meats, which they
vsed. And euen this was a prooffe
of his very vnspeakeable *Benig-
nity*, that coming into the world
to suffer for man, and carrying
such an intense loue towards the
Crosse, and such a most ardent de-
sire to abstaine from all earthly
comfort, and regalo; and to take
all that to himselfe, which was
most painfull and grieuous, that
so

so he might suffer the more for man, and satisfy the diuine Iustice more perfectly, and discouer and exercise that loue so much the more, which he carryed both to the eternall Father, and to the whole race of mankinde; yet neuertheles, he did in many things remit much of this rigour at some times, and did both in his feeding and cloathing, serue himselfe of ordinary and vsuall things; so to shew himselfe more appliable, and sweet towards them with whō he conuersed and fed; & to make himselfe more inuitable by all men, and to giue them all, the greater hope of their saluation. So saith the venerable Abbot *Euthymius*. It was fit that our Lord who came to take away sinne, should be benigne and sweet, and that he should accommodate himselfe to the weakenes of men

to.

to gaine them for heauen, as he did; and for this cause he went to the table of sinners, and fed vpon their meates; though he did it in a most temperate and religious manner, as it becometh holy men to doe. And although at times, he condescended thus to the vsuall custome of men for the winning of them; he did not for all this, giue ouer his manner of austere and painfull life, which he also exercised at certaine times; as namely during those forty daies, which he fasted in the desert.

This was said by *Euthymius*; whereby it is confirmed, that so to admit of the inuitatiō of sinfull people, and especially such as did inuite him with a malicious minde, as if it had been but to eate with them, was a worke of supreme *Benignity*, whereby he shewed his
most

most sweet loue ; in the strength whereof, he had a meaning to comfort and saue all the world.

Especially he shewed this vn-
speakeable *Benignity*, in the time
of his Passion . For being in the
house of Caiphas , *Matth. 23. Luc.*
22. before that Councell of vniust
Iudges, & they asking him whe-
ther he were *Christ* and the Sonne
of God or no; & our Lord seeing
that they asked it not with a de-
sire of knowing the truth, or for
the doing of Iustice , but onely
from his answere to take occasion
of blaspheming him, and con-
demning him to death, and accu-
sing him to Pilate, to the end that
he might execute that vniust sen-
tence , which they had giuen a-
gainst him. And obseruing, that
by reason they were so wicked, &
so vaine , and proud , they were
most vnworthy of any answere;
yet

yet neuertheles that foueraigne Maiesty of *Christ*, the Kinge of glory refused not to giue them answere, and disdained not to speake to them; but in very modest wordes, was content to declare to them, who he was by saying thus; Herafter when my Passion is at an end, the Sonne of man shall be sitting at the right hand of the power of God; which was as much as to say, that he was to raigne, & discouer his power, and authority as he was God, coequall to the eternall Father. And they enducing another question hereupon, saying; *Therefore belike thou art the sonne of God*; he answered also to that, saying; *your selues say that I am so*, which was to answere truth: but with very modest, and humble words; whereby though he gaue to vnderstand, that in very truth he
was

was the Sonne of God, yet he affirmed it not expressely, as it was fit not to doe to such as would not profit by it, though the answer had been more expresse & cleer. And by answering them after this manner, he also shewed his inclination to answer them more plainely, and directly to what they asked, if they would haue knowen the truth, to haue beleueed it. And this he signified by saying. If I tell you what you aske, you will not beleue mee; and if I aske you any thing, to the end that I may teach you truth, you will not answer mee.

Our Lord by answering these questions, which were asked by Iudges so wicked, so cruell, and so vnderferuing of any respect at this hands, did shew how free his heart was from all passion, and choler; since he answered with so
great

great serenity, & peace of minde; and therby he preuented that aspersion which they would haue cast vpon him, if he had been wholly silent; and he discovered the *Benignity* and sweetnes of his immése charity towards his enemies, since he obeyed them, who had noe right of commaundmēt ouer him, and satisfied their demandes who were so vnworthy of all answere.

Let vs follow the example of *Benignity*, which here our móst blessed Lord and Sauour giues vs, and not onely let vs loue our enemies, as wee haue already shewed: but let vs also be benigne towards them; and let vs grant them, what they desire when it may lawfully be done; condescending to their disposition and inclination in lawfull thinges; and speaking to them humbly, and

and modelty, and shewing them the loue of our hearts, and the desire wee haue to giue them gust, and contentment, in such things as are agreeable to the wil of God.

This doth our Lord himselfe expect, and aduise vs to, by Saint Luke saying; **Loue your enemies,** and do good to them: and if they desire to borrow money of you, or any other thing, affoord it without hoping after any interest. And when there is need, giue with a free hand, without expecting any other reward, then of Almighty God; and so the reward which God wil giue you for such workes, will be very abundant and gear. For you shall be the sonnes of the most high God, who is benigne, euen to men who are vngratefull and wicked; and though they be vnworthy of his benefits, and breakers of his com-
maund-

maundments, & worthy of eternall torments, yet he ceaseth not to doe them good.

THE XI. CHAPTER.

Of the Benignity, which wee are to vse towards our neighbours, doing them honour by good wordes; and of the examples which Christ our Lord gave vs herein.

THe vertue of Benignity, requires that a man should be courteous, and well mannered in the wordes, he speaketh of his neighbour; and that both in presence, and absence, he doe him honour by his manner of speeche. For Benignity maketh a man sweet and ciuill in his discourse and cōuersation, sticking close to the end of charity, which is a spirituall, and eternall good. And a
prin-

principall part of this sweet con-
 uersation doth consist, in that
 the wordes be ciuill and cur-
 teous; whereby wee may honour
 our neighbour, according to the
 quality of his person and state:
 and for this reason, a man who
 vseth curtesy, is called benigne,
 and gentle, and he adorneth his
 neighbour with good wordes.
 There are men, who being gouer-
 ned by a spirit of this world, or
 els by their naturall condition
 (not corrected by reason,) vse to
 speake of their neighbours, with
 little estimation of them, & when
 there is a latitude of giuing the
 a title more honorable, they giue
 him the least they can, so it be
 without offence to the quality of
 his person. And whereas they
 might treat them in better ter-
 mes, they proceed in such sorte,
 as to shew little estimation of
 them.

them, and so they trouble and greiue them. And especially they speake of their neighbours, when they are absent, in wordes which shew they make little account of them; and thereby they thinke to exalt themselues, & to make themselves more esteemed by others; but they are deceiued. For in that they do not the thing, which is required by charity, *which is benigne and sweet*, they obtaine not that which they pretend, which is to be esteemed and honoured; but they are despised, and dispraised for it. For estimation springeth from loue; and if you loue a man, you esteeme him; and so on the other side, contempt springeth from hate; and to abhorre a man, is to despise him. And so when a man is wel conditioned, and courteous in his wordes, towards his neighbours, he is generally be-
loved;

ued ; and for the same reason all men respect, esteeme, and honour him : for they loue a man , who loueth them ; and they esteem & honour, such as esteem, and honour them . But when a man is discourteous in his wordes , and appeareth to make small account of his neighbours, he is abhorred by all men; or if they doe not abhorre his person , yet they abhorre his condition, & discourteous language; and for the same reason, he is little accounted of, and despised by all.

This is taught vs by holy scripture saying; *A sweet and gentle word, doth reconcile, and winne the hearts of men, and makes thē their friends, and multiplieth others, and doth sweeten & appease enemies; and a benigne and gracious tongue doth abound in a good man.* The meaning is; it produceth an abū-

dant fruite in the heart of others,
 mouing them also to be benigne,
 and to speake gently & sweetly,
 to such as speake gently & sweet-
 ly to them. The holy Ghost saith
 of the seruant of God, that he is
 well mannered, and curteous in
 his wordes; and this is that diuine
 fruite, which he produceth in his
 neighbours, to make them meek,
 and Benigne, as himselfe is. And
 of him, on the other side, who is
 rude, & discourteous in his words,
 the Holy Ghost also saith; *The*
stroke of a whippe, maketh the flesh
blacke, and blew; but the blow of an
ill tongue, breakes the bones; that is
 to say; it doth many times hurt,
 and wound the soule, in such sort,
 as to cause is to fall into sorrow,
 and impatience, & hatred, wher-
 by the strength, and vigour of
 that grace and vertue, which it
 had, is lost. This hurt, doth a
 dis-

disc
 whi
 in
 spe
 vs
 hi
 hi
 w
 th
 th
 9
 f
 c
 t

discurteous & vnmannery word,
which wanteth *Benignity*, produce
in the soule of man.

Of this kinde of *Benignity* in
speech *Christ* our Lord did leaue
vs most excellent examples, in
his holy Ghospell: They brought
him one day, a man in his bed
who was a paralitike, & breaking
through the rooffe of the house,
they placed him before him; *Mar.*
9. and our Lord, behoulding the
faith of them, who brought him,
did him so particular a fauour,
that he efficaciously moued him
to a great sorrow for his sinnes,
and to haue faith in our Lord, &
confidence that he should be for-
giuen. And being then in so good
a disposition, he pardoned them,
and so he declared himselfe to
doe, by saying, *Sonne, thy sinnes*
are forgiven thee. This man being
so miserable in his corporal state,

and being so base of condition,
as that he might without shame,
carry his couch vpon his backe,
and being a sinfull man besides,
(for as Saint *Hierome*, notes he had
contracted his disease by his sin-
nes) and coming to the presence
of our Lord with the vncleannes
of those sinnes, by the waight
whereof he was oppressed (for
there they appeared to haue been
take from him by our Lord;) the
same Lord being the creator of
all things did yet call him *Sonne*;
which is a title of great sweetnes
of loue, and sheweth such equa-
lity in condition, as runnes be-
tween fathers, & sonnes. So high
a Lord, doth honour and exalt
so base a man, so farre; that in
some sort he maketh him equall
to his Angells, and Saints by gi-
uing him the name, and title of
his Sonne. For this is the great
dig:

dignity & honour, which Saints and Angels haue, to be the sonnes of the most high God. So doth S. Hierome, note saying; O admirable humility of *Christ* our Lord, that to a contemptible and defeated man, without strength or health in any part of his body, whom the Priests of the lawe would haue despised, and disdained euen so much as to touch, our most *Benigne* Lord was content to giue the name of *Sonne*!

There came to *Christ* our Lord, *Marc. 5. Luc. 8.* a woman who had a fluxe of blood; she touched the skirt of his garment, and remained whole; and our Lord hauing brought her forth to light; and she hauing confessed the benefite which she had receiued, our Lord said publickly to her; *daughter thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.* He honoured her by calling her

F 3 daugh-

daughter, and by attributing her cure to her owne faith; & making her rich with Peace, and ioy of heart; which was an effect of the pardon of her sinnes, and of the grace he gaue her. And thus, by honouring the paraliticke, with the name of *Sonne*, and this woman by the name of *daughter*; we see it was no particular priuiledge, which he gaue to this, or that person onely; but that it was the cōmō stile which our most benigne Lord vsed; honouring with this name such meane and poore men and woemen, as came to him for any helpe.

His disciples being poore, and meane, and very full of defects, at such time as he conuersed with them in mortall flesh, sometimes he called *Sonnes*; yea and at some other times, he would call them, by that diminutive whereby fathers

thers call their sonnes, *little children*; to vnfold so much the more, that sweetnes of loue wherewith he called them *Sonnes*. At other times, he would call them *Friends*; and after the Resurrectiō, when the glory of his sacred Humanity, and the Maiesty of his Diuinity was more discovered, he called them his *Brothers*, when he spake of them to others in their absence. For once he said to S. Mary Magdalene; *Goe tell my brethren, I ascend to my Father and to your Father*. And againe he said to the *Maries*; *Goe tell my brethren, that they are to goe into Galilea, and that they shall see mee there*. All these are titles of great honour, and glory; and that our Lord should vse them towards men, who were so meane, and poore, and at a time, when still they were so imperfect; and especially that he did it after they

had quite forsaken him, in his Passion, was an effect of extreme Benignity in him.

THE XII. CHAPTER.

Of other examples, which Christ our Lord gaue vs, of his Benignity in the same kinde.

Christ our Lord, preaching in a Synagogue *Luc. 13.* they placed a woman, who was deformedly bent downe to the ground, by that diuell wherewith she was possessed. Now he hauing cured her, they calumniated him, in respect that he had done it vpon the Sabbath; and he defending his miracle, from that slander said; Which of you will not, vpon a Sabbath day, let your ox, or asse be vntyed, and carryed to the water? If this may well be done;
how

how much more is it conuenient,
to vntie the bond of sickenes,
wherby Satan had bound vp this
daughter of Abraham, although
it were vpon the Sabbath day?

That title of the whole world,
which was most honourable a-
mongst the Iewes, and whereby
they prised themselves, and wher-
in they gloried most, was to be
called the *sonnes of Abraham*; and
so vpon a certaine occasion when
they were disposed to magnify
this honour, they said to Christ;
Wee are the sonnes of Abraham. And
whereas it had beene curtesy
enough towards that woman, if
Christ our Lord had said; It had
been conuenient to free this *affli-
cted woman*, from that misery; or
to deliuer this *miserable creature*
from that infirmity: he could not
content himselfe therewith; but
was resolved to honour her with
this

the most glorious name, which could be vsed, amongst the Iewes, by saying; *This daughter of Abraham*; this woman, who according to the extraction of flesh and blood, is descended of *Abraham*; yea and in the way of spirit also; for she is an imitator of his faith.

When *Christ* our Lord receiued that message *Iob. 11.* concerning the sicknes of *Lazarus*, and being resolved vpon his death (which succeeded within few daies after) to raise him vp againe to life, he said to his disciples; *Our friend Lazarus sleepes; and I will goe waken him.* It had been enough, and more then enough, for a Lord of so great Maiesty, to haue said, *Lazarus sleepest*, or (since he would needes doe him honour to say) *Lazarus my seruant*, or *Lazarus, whose guest I haue been, sleepest*; and with this, he had done him much
honour,

honour . Yet his enamoured heart , could not content it selfe with this ; but he would needes passe on, and say , *our friend Lazarus*, which is a word of the greatest curtesy and honour. For if it goe for a point of high honour, to be accounted the friend of an earthly King; and for a great fauour, and regale to any vassaile, that a King should call him by that name; what honour must it be, for a mortall man to be accounted a friend by *Christ* our Lord, the King of heauen? and what kinde of felicity , and comfort must it be , to be called so , by *Christ* our Lord himselfe; and that not in complement, but from the very rootes of his heart? And so *Christ* our Lord honouring *Lazarus* with this word of friend, did also honour his disciples; equalling them with himselfe, and making

king them his companions in the friendship of *Lazarus*, and declaring that they were all his friends.

This *Benignity*, which *Christ* our Lord did vse both in word and deed, whilest yet he liued in mortall flesh, hath been also vsed by him, since he ascended vp to heauen, towards many seruants of his, to whom he hath seuerally appeared. And leauing many examples of Saints, to whom he hath done it, sometimes in the forme of a childe, and sometimes of a most beautifull young man, & sometimes of a most glorious person; and hath honoured and comforted them, both with words and deedes, of most sweet loue: Wee will speake here, of one admirable apparition, and that of great authority, whereof we haue made some mention elsewhere, to another purpose; and in respect

it

it was vouchsafed to a person of very meane quality it doth so much the more disclose the Benignity of *Christ* our Lord, and makes vs the more confident of his goodnes. *Saint Paulinus* Bishop of Nola, relateth how certaine ships going from Sardinia towards Italy, grew into a great tempest, close by the Iland; and the rest of them breaking, and sinking there, one of them which was fraught with corne, did not split, but yet was extremely ill treated by the storme. The mariners, did all leaue her, and left also in her, an old poore man of Sardinia, who was yet no Christian, but had begun to be catechised in that faith; and it was his office to cleanse, and pumpe the ship. When the mā obserued himselfe to be alone, and in a ship which had neither anker nor sterne,

sterne, (for she had lost all, in the tempest:) he began with teares to recommend himself to *Christ* our Lord, and to beg remedy at his hands. He passed in this anguish, six whole daies, without eating any thing, and still continuing in this affliction, *Christ* our Lord appeared to him in great brightness and beauty, and comforted him and fed him, and commaunded him to cut the mast, which was the ordinary remedy, wherof the ship seemed capable, in that extremity. For though our Lord was resolved to deliuer the poore man, yet he was pleased withall, that he should also do his part. He put himselfe therfore, to cut the mast; and because he alone was not able to doe it, the Angells of heauen helped him in it. When this visit was at an end, and the man had disposed himselfe to sleepe,

leepe, our Lord came againe and appeared to him, and gently touching his eare with his hand, and gently pulling it, he waked him, and required him to goe about the doing of those things, which were necessary for his nauigation; and in that which himselfe could not doe, he had the assistance of the Angells. Another time, he appeared to him, sitting in the pupp of the ship, where the sterne is went to be; letting him see that it was he, who gouerned her. The good man came to the feet of our Lord; and perceiuing, that he vouchsafed to be so familiar and *Benigne* towards him; & that he did so cherish, and inuite him to himselfe, he tooke great courage and confidence, and bent his head downe, sometime towards his sacred feet, and sometimes reposed it in his bosome.

Our

Our Lord departed then, hauing both by word and deed, affoorded those great fauours and regaloes of so great *Benignity*, to this old Catechumenus. And the ship, being directed, and conducted by the fauour of heauen, sailed three and twenty daies by sea; and and passing by *Africke*, and *Sicily*, and by the *Faro* of that Iland, he came at last to the coast of *Lucana*, which is the lower part of *Calabria*. There the inhabitants did receiue him, and were all eye witnesses of the miracle; seeing him come safe in a ship, which was all defeated, without sterne, or men to gouerne her. From thence they conducted the old man to *Saint Paulinus*, who receiued him with great loue, and baptised him; and whereas first his name was *Valgius*, he called him now by the name of *Victor*.
And

And the Saint affirmes, that this was a very well conditioned, and a sincere innocent kinde of man, and that he would recount this benefit, and apparition of *Christ* our Lord, with so great tendernes, and deuotion, that whosoever heard him, could not choose but weepe from the heart.

By this example, and many others, ouer which I passe for breuities sake; *Christ* our Lord hath discovered, that the *Benignity*, and and sweetnes of his condition, which he vsed towards miserable me, whilest he liued in this world in mortall flesh, is still conserued by him, and still he vseth it towards such as wjll profit by it.

THE

THE XIII. CHAPTER.

*Of the Benignity and curtesy of speech,
Which the holy Apostles vsed in
imitation of Christ our
Lord,*

THis Benignity of speaking in sweet & ciuill words, which was vsed by Christ our Lord towards men, he commaunded his disciples in the Gospell that they should also vse, towards their neighbours. And so when he sent them to preach to the people of Israell, he commaunded that as soon as they were entering into any house, they should instantly salute them, who were in it, saying, *peace be to this house,* desiring and begging of God, the most holy gift of peace for them all. And this was to teach them, that

that they were to be curteous and affable, and benigne to all them, with whom they conuersed. The Apostles obserued this order, very exactly. S. Peter the Prince of the Church, called the wicked Iewes his *Brethren*, who had crucified our Lord, saying. *Act. 23. Brethren I confesse that you did it by ignorance; doe penance, and you shall be forgiven.* And such as were conuerted, he called his *fellowes, and equals*, *2. Pet. 1.* in the faith, and grace of *Christ* our Lord. And the great Euāgelist Saint Iohn, called the faithfull, *his much beloued children*. And writing to a Christian woman called *Electa*; he saith in the letter, *to the Lady Electa and her children, Whom I truly loue.* And writing to another Christian called *Caius*, he saith, *to my much beloued Caius, Whome I doe very truly loue.*

But what then shall wee say of
Saint

Saint Paule? With what Benignity, with what curtesy, and good manners, and with what regale, did he speake to all men? For speaking to the Iewes who still continued in their infidelity, he saith *Act. 13.* *Men and Brethren, and the sonnes of Abraham, to you was that word sent from heauen, which giueth saluation.* And speaking to the Christians, who had been conuerred from gentility he saith, *Philip. 4.* *My brethren much beloued and much desired, who are my ioy, and my crowne.* And in another place he saith, *1. Tim. 2.* *You are my hope, my ioy, and my glory.* And speaking to Kinge Agrippa, who was a wicked Prince, by nation a Gentile, and by sect a Iew, he made him an exordium, full of estimation, curtesy, and good fashion, saying, *I bold my self happy, o Kinge Agrippa, in that I am to defend my selfe before thee, concerning those things*

things, whereof I am accused by the
 Iewes; especially since thou knowest the
 customes and questions, which are a-
 mongst them; and therefore I beg thy
 patience in hearing mee. By these few
 wordes, so full of diuine sweetnes
 and eloquence, he made him so
 propitious, and gained so farre
 vpon his good will, as to make
 him gladly, and with great atten-
 tion, giue eare to a discourse, and
 sermon full of diuine mysteries.
 And speaking to Festus the Iudge,
 a Gentile and an Idolater; & ha-
 uing heard this word of iniury,
 from his mouth, Paule thou speakest
 like a madd man; too much learning
 hath put thee out of thy wits (for him
 selfe being blind, vnderstood no-
 thing but earthly things, and so
 the mysteries of heauen which S.
 Paule expressed, seemed madnes
 to him) he answered thus; Most
 excellent Festus, I am not madd; the

G

wordes

wordes which I haue spoken to thee, are full of sobriety, and truth. What admirable Benignity was this, not to be offended or disgusted, nor a whit altered, by such a great affront, as it was to be called, *mad man*; and to answer with so great serenity of minde, and so great sweetnes of wordes, so full of curesy, and good manners, as to call him *good or Excellēt* who was an impious Idolater? and he might say so too with truth: for although he were not *Good or excellent* in his Religion, nor in that kinde of vertue which maketh a man iust in the sight of almighty God; yet he was very vertuous in conuersation, and morally vertuous, and so vsing a word of a double signification in a true sence, he honoured him as much as he could, yet still speaking truth. The Apostle did much declare his Benignity, &
sua-

suavity by these examples, where-
by he honoured his neighbours,
both in speaking to them, and
speaking of the: but much more
he discovered it, in this instance
which followeth.

Onesimus an Infidell, & a slave,
fled from *Philemon* his Master, and
came to *S. Paule* being at Rome.
The Apostle receiued him with
much loue, and instructed him in
the faith, and conuerted him by
the grace of *Christ* our Lord, and
baptised him, and returned him
to his Master, and recommended
him by his owne letter, wherein he
wrote to this effect. I beseech thee
for my some *Onesimus*, whom I
haue engendred, for as much as
concernes the spirituall life of
grace, whilest I was in prison at
Rome, and I embraced him as I
would doe mine owne bowells.
Which signifieth to this sence, I

receiued him with much render-
nes of affectiō, as a sonne whom I
loue with my whole heart, & with
all the affections thereof. If thou
houldest mee for thy friend, and
if thou louest and respectest mee,
as such an one; receiue him euen
as thou wouldest doe mee, with
the same affection of loue, and
with the same estimation, and
good vsage wherewith thou woul-
dest receiue mee. And if he owe
thee any thing, either for hauing
runne away, or for taking any
thing from thee, put it vpon my
account, demandaunt satisfaction
and paiment thereof at my háds;
for I offer to pay and satisfy it
all, for him. Grant my suite, as I
desire it, and I will reioyce with
thee in our Lord, for this good
worke of thine. Make my heart
glad, by doing as much as I haue
asked; which is to say, giue mee
this

this comfort and this regalo, that thou receiue and treat *Onesimus*, as I haue begged at thy hands.

Who would not be amazed to read, and heare these wordes of *Saint Paule*? That an Apostle of *Christ* our Lord, a Prince and Instructor of the world, hauing been personally visited before by *Christ* our Lord himselfe, and raised by him vp euen to the third heauen; and chosen out to iudge all the Nations of the Gentiles, yea and the very Angells with them, in company of *Christ* our Lord; and being so employed, both day and night in preaching the Ghospell, and gouernment of the Church, as that *in his brest he carried the sollicitude, and care of all the parricular Churches thereof*; that such a man I say as this, so venerable to the Inhabitants of heauen, and so reuerenced here on earth; should

take so much to heart, and negotiate at so great leasure, the busines of a fugitiue slave, but newly conuerted to the faith; as that he should write a letter frō Rome to *Phrygia*, which was in *Asia minor*, where his Master was dwelling in *Colossus*, and recommend him to be receiued, to be pardoned, and to be treated well. And not being contented to performe this office of charity, in ordinary wordes (which yet had been sufficient,) that he should honour *Onesimus* with termes of so great estimatiō, loue and sweetnes; and should recommend him to his Master in termes, and with reasons, of so great exaggeration, as a Father would do, recommending his only sonne, whom he did extreamely loue, to some great friend of his.

This was the *Benignity* and curtesy and suauity of speech, which
the

the Apostles learned of *Christ* our Lord, and this must all faithfull Christians imitate, treating our neighbours with termes of curtesy, and good manners; and giuing the the most honourable titles, and names we can, according to the estate of euery one, and according to the custome of that people amongst whom wee liue, in speaking honorably of them, both in presence and absence.

In this sorte wee shall preuent many sinnes, which we vse to commit, for want of obseruing the rule of charity. We shall free our selues from detraction and murmuring, which is a vice through which a man contemnes, and affronts his neighbour, speaking ill of him, and recording his defects and faults, whether it be with truth, or with falshood. But howsoeuer this is a vice much abhor-

red by Almighty God, and ver̄y
abominable to them who feare
him; which made Saint Paule say,
detracters, who are abhorred by Al-
mighty God. And the wise man in
the Prouerbes, saith. *The murmurer*
who speaketh ill of his neighbour, and
maketh a scorne of him, is abominable
to men. And because when God
hath abomination towards a
sinner, it is to wish him the euill
of eternall paine; from hence it
is that the murmurer is subiect to
eternall malediction, and con-
demnation, as Ecclesiasticus chap.
28. signifieth, saying. *The murmu-*
rer, who secretly speaketh ill of his
neighbour, and who hath two tongues,
(because in the presence of his
neighbour he speaketh well of
him, and in his absence he infam-
meth him by ill report) *is accursed*
both of God and man; because he
hath giuen trouble to many, de-
priving

priuing them of the peace, and quiet of their hearts; and filling them with grief and anger, and destroying that agreement and good correspondence, which they had with their neighbours.

We shall also deliuer our selues by this meanes, frō the sinne of contumely and reproach; into which they fall, who face to face giue ill wordes to their neighbours; whereby they vnderualue, and affront them; and this is the vice of them who want iudgmēt, as the wise man affirmeth, saying; *He who speaketh contumelious words to his neighbours, is a foole.* And in another place, all fooles are apt to thrust themselues into suites, and strifes, and such other busineses, as tend towards the affronting of others; or els to the being affronted by others, with

iniurious wordes. And this is so grievous a sinne, and so worthy of punishment, as that Christ our Lord said; *He who shal cal his neighbour foole, with a minde to affront him, is worthy of eternall fier.*

Wee shall also thus excuse our selues from cursing others, whereby men offer their neighbours to the diuell, that they may be damned, or els, whereby they desire them any other euil. Which sinne is so grievous, as that it excludes men from that glory, to which they were created, as the Apostle signified 1. Cor. 6. when he said; *They who curse men (desiring the accomplishment of that with their heart, which they say with their tongue) shall not possesse the kingdoms of God.*

We shall defend our selues from these sinnes so pernicious to the soule, which are committed by the

the tongue, if we be well conditioned, and *benigne* in our words; whereby wee honour our neighbours in their presence, & speake not ill of them in their absence. And together with this wee shall, by the good vse of our *benigne* speech, giue great gust to Almighty God, and shall deserue much in his sight; and wee shall winne the loue of our neighbour, making them friendly, and kinde to vs; to the end that they may willingly receiue any good aduice, and counsell from vs, which wee shall thinke fit to giue. And wee shall conserue the peace, and strength of our owne soules, yea and of our estates also for the sustaining of our liues; which many times is lost, by the ill gouernement of our tongues; and finally wee shall edify our neighbours, by the exáple of our good words.

All this was signified by the wise man, when he said; *The peaceable and quiet tongue, is a sweet tree of life.* Which signifieth that it recreateth, and comforteth the hearts of men, and giues them spirituall life, and strength; and frees them from the mortall distempers of anger, and hatred, and other passions. And this is wrought by that man, who giueth good language, through the much gaine and merit, which they get in the sight of Almighty God. And in the also, who heare the good speech which is vsed by any man of his neighbours, worketh the like effect; for thereby they are edified, and induced towards a loue of vertue.

THE

THE XIV. CHAPTER.

How wee are to exercise this Benignity, and to vse this good manners, towards them who vse vs ill.

SOME Christians there be, who are very courteous, and well conditioned towards their neighbours, as long as those neighbours treat them with the same curtesy and ciuility; but if their neighbours faile towards them, they also faile; and then they treatethē with the same discourtesy and disgrace, wherewith they are treated, and they vse the same ill termes which are vsed to thē. This is no good, but an ill spirit. For, that I should be well conditioned towards my neighbour, because he also is so to mee, is no loue of charity, but a loue of interest.

interest, and concupiscence; and that I should faile in curtesy, and good cōdition towards another, because he falles short therein towards me, is not the vertue of *Benignity*, but it is the vice of reuenge. That which charity and *Benignity* requires, and which God exacteth at our hands, is that although another man do not what he ought, yet I doe; and that although another man should faile of vsing me with due curtesy, yet that I faile not thereof towards him. For by this meanes, it wil appeare that in the ciuility, which I vse towards my neighbours, I am not moued by humane respects; but for the loue of Almighty God: and that I pretend not proper honour or interest, but the glory of Almighty God, and the profit of my soule, and the edification of my neighbour. And
in

in this sorte I being of good condition, and shewing curtesy towards him, who doth not so to me, I shal please almighty God much the more: for I shall moue more purely for the loue of him, and shall exercise more vertue, and encrease merit, and gaine more reward in the sight of God. For, together with the *Benignity*, which I shall exercise, by carrying my selfe sweetly towards my neighbour, I shall also exercise patience, and humility, in bearing with his ill condition: and I shall exercise more charity, by pardoning the iniury which he doth me, in treating mee ill. This was taught vs by the Apostle Saint *Paul* with a kinde of heauenly inuention; associating *Benignity* and *Patience* in suffering iniuries, with *Charity* in pardoning the; for thus he saith; *Colos. 3. Cloashe your selues spiritually,*

as it becometh iust men, and the elect of God, With the bowells of mercy, and Benignity; that so you may be affable, and sweetly conditioned towards your neighbours; and With humility, modesty, and patience also; enduring, for the loue of God, the ill treating and peruerse condition of one another, and pardoning also the iniuries of one another. And so also, if it happen that any one be offended, and affronted by any other, and that he haue reason to complaine, yet let him pardon it in imitation of Iesus Christ our Lord, who when wee were wicked, and as enemies of his had done him wrong; did forgive our sinnes and the offences, which we committed against him; and did free vs from them by meanes of Baptisme, and Penance; without taking that vengeance of vs, which we deserved.

This

This is the substance of S. Paules discourse, & these are those rules of *Charity* and *Benignity*, which we are to keep, that so we may comply entirely with the will of Almighty God in this behalfe.

THE XV. CHAPTER.

That it is not contrary to Benignity, to reprehend wicked, and obstinate persons in their wickednes, severely as Christ our Lord did.

IT is much to be noted concerning this vertue of *Benignity*, which *Christ* our Lord taught vs, both by his word, and by his example; that there are some, both sayings and deedes of *Christ* our Lord in the Ghospell, which to ignorant persons might seem contrary to this *Benignity*; but which yet are not contrary, but very agreeable

greable thereunto. For *Charity*, which teacheth vs, that for the glory of God, and good of soules, we must vse this *Benignity* towards our neighbors, of speaking to them in kinde & gentle words; the same teacheth vs also, that when wee haue authority in our hands, we may vse words so seuerer, and pricking in some cases, towards publicke and obstinate sinners, and who by their ill example are pernicious to others, as may discover the grieuousnes of their sinnes, and may disgrace, and condemne them as they deserue: that so if it be possible, they may be reformed, or at least that others may feare to follow their ill example. And now wee will goe declaring some instances, which *Christ* our Lord left vs of this truth, in the holy Gospell.

Saint *Luke* chap. 13. relateth, that

that our Lord being then, as it seemed, in Galile, which was the iurisdiction of Herod, some of the Pharisees came and said to him; *Avoid this country for Herod hath a minde to kill thee.* Our Lord made them this answer; *Go tel that foxe, that he may see I cast diuells both out of bodies and soules, to day and to morrow, and that the third day I shall dy, and by ending my life giue end and perfection to these workes of mine.* By these three dayes, our Lord vnderstood the time of his whole life; and sometimes he called that, *one day*, and some other times *three daies*; to signify the shortnes of this life; and to signify also, as wee said before, that as no humane inuention or meanes was able to make the natural day one minute shorter then it is; so neither was there any meanes to shorten his life, by one minute.

And

And therefore the substance of what he said was this. During all that time of my life, which is giuen mee by the determination of my eternall Father, I shall conuerse in this world, and doe those workes, for which he sent mee; which is to teach truth, & to cast diuells both out of bodies and soules, and to bestow both corporall and spirituall health vpon men: and as long as this time shall last, neither *Herod*, nor any other power vnder heauen, shall be able to take my life from mee. But when the houre shall be come, which is determined by my Father, I wil offer my selfe to death, to giue perfect life and health to the world. Yet this I will not doe in *Galile*, but in *Ierusalem*. For as it is not fit, that any Prophet dy out of *Ierusalem*; so especially is it decreed of this Prophet (who for
his

his eminency and excellency is called *The Prophet* which is the *Messias*) that he shall dy in *Ierusalem*. And as for the rest of the Prophets, it hath ordinarily been true, and so also it will bee, that they haue been put to death and are to dy in *Ierusalem*; because in that Citty, the wickednes of the who gouerne the people doth abound.

Now *Herod*, who was called *Antipas*, was a very wicked King, and very scandalous. He was an adulterer, and an incestuous person; for he tooke his owne brothers wife from him. He was a murtherer, & a sacrilegious man; for he had taken away the life of the great Saint *Iohn Baptist*; and as it should seem he also went about to murder *Christ* our Lord secretly; least the people, being instructed by his holy doctrine, might

might growe to abhorre *Herods* wicked life. He was also a most vaine, giddy creature; for to reward the dance of a girle, he promised the one halfe of his kingdome, if need had been; and he paid the life of *Saint Iohn* for it. He was moreouer a false and dissembling person, for he pretended that he murdered *Saint Iohn* for the complying with his oath; whereas indeed that was not the cause, but for the contenting of a wicked woman, and for the settling and securing of his owne wicked life.

Now *Christ* our Lord, resolving to discover the authority of the Kinge of heauen and earth, and of the Lord of al creatures, which himselfe had in his hand, for the reproofe, and punishment of all the powerfull men of this world; and to shew how free he was from
all

all humane feare; and to giue an example to the Prelates of his Church, of that holy liberty, which in such case they were to vse, towards the Kings of the earth; and to discover also, how vile, and contemptible, sinnefull men are, in the sight of God, how rich, and noble, and great Lords soeuer they might chance to be, and particularly meaning to declare to them, who bad him take heed of *Herod*, that he knew well enough all the fetches and designs of that crafty man, & that he had no need to be tould thereof by any other: I say to declare and discover all these things, he spake this word; *Tell that foxe &c.* Which was to say vnder a metaphor; Tell that crafty, and dissembling man, who by the wickednes of his life, giues a pestilent odour of ill example, that
 what;

whatsoever eadeuour he may vse,
he can take no part of my life from
mee, till my selfe shall voluntarily
part with it; as I will do, when
the time ordained by my eternall
Father, shall arriue.

Being therefore most conuenient,
for these ends which wee
haue touched, that *Christ* our Lord
should speake with this authority
of a Lord, he did yet obserue
great modesty and *Benignity* therein.
For he might well haue said;
Tell that wicked man, that adulterer,
that murderer, and sacrilegious
person; yea or tell it to that
diuell (for all this had fitted him,
& he deserued it well;) but *Christ*
our Lord would not vse any of
these termes, but fell vpon a more
moderate word, as this was; Tell
that crafty and dissembling man, that
he hath no power to stop the course of
my life. And so shewing the authority,

rity, and holy liberty which the Prelates of the Church are to vse towards the great men of this world; and discouering also, his owne diuine wisdom; he did ioyntly teach vs that moderatiō, wherewith we are to exerceise that authority and liberty.

Other examples; which may breed the like difficulty in the mindes of ignorant men, are the reprehensions which Christ our Lord gaueto the Scribes and Pharisees of the people of Isræll, in very seuerē wordes, which did greatly confound, and grievously wound them; for he would say sometimes, as Matt. 12. *You generation of vipers, you can not speake well being so wicked. This wicked & adulterous generatiō asketh signes:* At other times he would say, as Matt. 23. *Woe be to you Scribes and Pharisees you hypocrites. Woe be to you, who are*
H
blinde,

blinde, and guides of the blinde. And Ioh. 8. You are of the duell, and him you haue for your Father, and you cooperate to his Wicked ends.

Now let vs see the mystery of these words of *Christ* our Lord, & how they were not contrary to that *Charity* and *Benignity*, which he taught vs, but full of conformity to the same. And let vs also see, who they be, who may vse such wordes; and to what kinde of persons; & for what ends they may be vsed.

The Scribes and Pharises, who were the Doctours, and should haue been the true Religious me of *Israell*, were at that time, not onely wicked, but wicked they were in all extreimity, and their sinnes were very publicke, & very contrary to all Religion. And with being so wicked, they yet would needes sell themselves for good

good, and holy; and they accompanied their wicked life, with ill precepts, which were most pernicious to the people. For by their wicked life, and peruerse directions, and with their pretences and deceits, they corrupted the manners of ignorant people; and they were blind & obstinate. And besides these sinnes, which were ordinary in them, they harboured that supreme wickednes, of hindering the saluation, which *Christ* our Lord came to worke, in the soules of men; calumniating his most holy life, and attributing to *Belzebub*, those most euident and expresse miracles, which he wrought by diuine power; and persecuting him to whom they should haue carryed all veneration, and exhibited al obedience, as to the true *Messias*; and yet desiring and procuring by all the

waies they could, to put him to death, who came to giue the life.

These men being such as I haue said, it was necessary that *Christ* our Lord, (who was sent by his Father to giue testimony to the truth, and to take scandalls out of the world, and to giue remedy to soules) vsing the authority, which he had, of Sauour of the world, & King of heauen, should reprehend vice; and that concerning publicke sinnes, he should reprehend them publickely; and that concerning grieuous & very hurtfull sinnes, he should reprehend them grieuously, according to the quality and perniciousnes of the same: that so they, who were faulty, might well feele the great hurt they did; and all the rest of the people, might be disabused, and not haue cause to follow either the ill exāple, or ill precepts
of

of their wicked Teachers and go-
uernours. And now that *Christ* our
Lord might execute this so im-
portant office for the saluation
of soules, which was ordeined to
the ends of true *Charity*, such re-
prehensions of his were necessary,
as might declare the grienousnes
of the hipocrisy, and other sinnes
of those Teachers, and the hurt
they did to the people; and the
damnation which they provided
for themselues, by committing
such sinnes: and he toold them,
who was the principall Author
thereof, namely the diuell, whom
they obeyed; and the necessity
which they had, of making re-
course to strong remedies; for
they were sinnes which were inhe-
rited from their predecessors, who
had been wicked, and they were
deeply rooted in their hearts.

Christ our Lord, did especially

H 3

make

make such seuer and sharpe reprehensions, when they did falsely sooth, and flatter him. For many times, when they darted out in-iurious words against him, he reprehended the not; but answered them with all sweetnes, shewing his humility, and meekenes, and reaching vs to suffer wrongs, with patience. But when they flattered him, he reprehended them indeed: as when with counterfeite hearts, they said, *Master, Wee desire a signe of thee from heauen*; for then he answered them thus. *Matth. 12. You Wicked and adulterous generatiō. And when they said, Master Wee know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God according to truth.* For then he said, *Why doe you tempt mee, you hipocrites?* discovering therby, that he vnderstood their hearts, and that he would not pay himselfe with their flatteries, & counterfeite

perfect praises ; and teaching all
 the world , that wee were not to
 take gust in being soothed , nor
 to desire to be praised by men. So
 did S. Chrysostome obserue vpon
 these wordes, *Master wee desire that
 thou giue vs a signe frō heauen.* Where
 he saith , that first they iniured
 him, saying, *he had a diuell* ; and
 that then they flattered him, cal-
 ling him , *Master* . And therefore
 it is , that he reprehendeth them
 with vehemency , saying , *that
 they were a wicked generation* . So
 that, when they affront him with
 ill words, he answereth them with
 meekenes; and when they flatter
 him with a false heart, he giues
 them sharpe wordes . Our most
 blessed Lord discovering to vs
 thereby , that he was free from
 all passion ; and that neither he
 was put to impatience by affronts;
 nor that he was inueigled by flat-
 teries.

THE XVI. CHAPTER.

That it was conuenient, that Christ our Lord should vse these seuerer reprehensions, to teach the Prelates of his Church, how they should proceed against sinners: and how the Saints haue been euer wont to proceed.

BESIDES these reasons, why Christ our Lord did so sharply reprehend the finnes of the Scribes and Pharises, there is yet another; and it is for the instructing of the Prelates of the Church, after what manner they are to reprove the finnes of publicke, obstinate and rebellious sinners, which are of the more grievous sorte, and more preiudiciall to others; and that they are to doe it publickly, with great weight, and
force

force of words, to the end that obstinate sinners may finde how wicked they are; and that they may reforme themselves, and that others may feare, and take warning by their ill example; and that all sinnes, and sinners are not to bee reproued after the same manner, but some gently and sweetly; and others with seuerity and rigour, according to the quality of the sinne, and the obstinacy of the sinner, & the hurt which he doth thereby to others. And that these seuerer reprehensions, which are made in punishment of delinquents, must not be vsed by all, but by Superiours, who haue authority for the same; and that the end which such me haue, must not be the affront, nor the trouble of the sinner, but the reformation both of him, & others. And there-

fore *Charity*, which teacheth vs to be sweet, and benigne, towards some kinde of sinners; (because that course is fit for the good of their soules) the selfe same *Charity* teacheth vs, to be seuerer and strict towards others; because that also is conuenient, to the end that others may be warned, and they reformed. Saint *Gregory* noteth this, in these words. Some offences are to be reprehended with vehemency; to the end that the delinquent, who of himselfe perhaps, vnderstands not the grievousnes of his sinne, may come to finde it by the wordes of him who reprehends; and that he may growe to feare the committing of that sinne, which he thought to be but light, by the very severity wherewith it is corrected. And it is the duty of the Superiour to correct with great severity those
offen-

offences of their subjects, which are not gently to be endured; but he must not doe it out of anger, but out of a holy zeale; for feare, least if he correct not faults as he ought, himself grow to be faulty; and that the punishment which was due to the offences of his subjects, doe fall vpon himselfe through his negligence. And the same Saint saith in another place; that their sinnes who haue not lost shame, are to be reprehended after another sorte, then theirs who haue lost all shame. For seuerer reprehension is necessary for the reformation of them, who are growne impudent; but such as are still ashamed of their sinnes, are vsually better reformed, by some milde exhortation.

This stile, of severely reprehending the more grievous, and pernicious sorte of sinnes, which

haue been cōmitted by the powerfull men of this world, and by the false guide of soules, hath been obserued by the auncient Saints, who were moued to it by the *Holy Ghost*; and the Saints also of the Euangelicall Lawe, haue vsed the like, being instructed by the example of *Christ* our Lord; though it be true that these later, haue obserued it with greater moderation, and more mixture of suauity then the former; for so the Lawe of *grace* requires.

The Prophet *Nathan*, 2. Kings. 12. chap. reproveth Kinge *Dauid*, and hauing first propounded him a parable, he concluded saying; Thou art that man, who hath committed so great wickednes, as to take the wife of another: and for this sinne, the sword shall neuer faile to hang ouer thy house, as a punishment both of thee, and thy
 del.

descendents.

The Prophet Elias, 2. Kings. 18. chap. hauing heard that imputation which King Achab layed vpon him, in these wordes; *Art thou that man who troublest Israel?* did reprove him for that wickednes, which he had committed against God, and his Prophets; and made answer to him, after this manner. *I am not the man who trouble Israell; but thou and the house of thy Father, are they who trouble it: because thou hast forsaken the Lawe of our Lord.*

The Prophet EliZeus, 4. Kings. 3. chap. reprehending the sinnes of King Ioram, who was in company with Kinge Iosaphat, when he desired the Prophet to obtaine of God that he would send downe water to the army, for that it was ready to dy of thirst, made him this answer; *What hast thou to doe with me? goe to the Prophets of*

of thy Father, and of the mother; and if it were not for the respect of Kinge Iosaphat, who is present, for my part I would not so much as looke vpon thee.

The man of God, who was sent by him to Samaria, 4. Kings. 13. chap. and found King Ieroboam, who was in Bethelle, offering sacrifice vpon an Altar like a Priest, did addresse his speech as to the Altar, and thereby reprehended him, after this manner. *A sonne shall be borne of the house of David called Iosias, and he shall kill those Priests vpon thee, who are now offering incense on thee.*

The great Baptist of our Lord, Matth. 3. reprehending the Scribes and Pharises & Saduces, who came to his Baptisme, said thus to them. *O you generation of vipers. You men full of the venime of Sinne, and that so inueterate, as that*

that you haue inherited it from your Fathers; who hath forewarned you to fly from the wrath & iust vengeance of God? What wonder, what strange thing is this, that men so hard to be cōverted, by reason of your error and the false opinion you haue of your owne sanctity, should come to receiue my Baptisme, and doe penance, and so fly from eternall dāmnation? And Saint Peter, Act. 8. reprouing Simon Magus said. *Thy money perish with thee*; in that thou thoughtest, that the gift of God, which is imparted by the Holy Ghost, was to be bought with money. I see that thou art full of the bitternes, and gall of sinne, & that thou art bound fast thereby to euerlasting torments. And Saint Paul, Act. 13. said to Elimas the sorcerer. *O man full of falshood, and deceit, thou sonne of the diuell, and enemy*

enemy of all Iustice, who forbearst not to doe thy vttermoſt, to peruers the ſtraight waies of the lawe of God. And Saint Steven ſaid, to the Scribes, and Pharises. Act. 7. O you ſtiſſe necked men, and who haue not cut away the wickednes of your hearts, and of your eares, with the sword of the Word of God: You haue euer reſiſted the holy Ghost, as your forefathers did before you.

After this manner haue the Saints (with that authority, which they had from God for this purpose, and to comply with the duty of that office which God had giuen them) reprehended those men with sharpe and seuerer wordes, who by their wicked life, and the deceit and falsehood of their peruerse doctrine, had corrupted soules. And they were moued to reprehend them thus, by their great charity, in their loue to God, and

and their neighbours ; and by a most ardent zeale to the glory of God, & the good of soules. And it is a thing very worthy the being considered , that whereas the Saints doe sometimes vse such wordes in their reprehensions, as haue been expressed, they are not indeed affronting or iniurious wordes , when wee consider the heart , and end wherewith , and for which they are spokē; though yet they may seeme so be to, because they are the very same , which passionate men are wont to vse, when they affront others, and reuēge themselves of their neighbours. Whereby wee may be sure, that these holy mē did not speake those words with passion, and desire to giue disgrace , as these others doe; but with zeale of charity, and desire to doe good. And by this rule which followeth wee shall

shall discerne it plainly.

If they, who reprehend their neighbours, ouer whō they haue authority, with sharpe words, in cases when there is necessity to doe it; if they, I say, (abstracting from those cases of necessity, and in all things els, which they doe and say) shew themselves humble, meeke and full of pittie both louing, and doing good to their neighbours, and despising themselves, and suffering the iniuries and ill treaty, which they receiue from others, with patience; wee may cleerly see, that when they speake sharply to sinners, they do it not out of pride, or passion, or to put disgrace vpon them; but only out of a charitable desire to recouer, and cure their soules. For the men, who when they reprove sinners, speake words with inward passion, and out of reuenge,

uenge, doe the like when that is not the case, & they shew themselves reuengefull, angry, and proud: but holy men proceed not so; but when that necessary occasion ceaseth, they vse al men with much humility, and charity; and especially those very persons, whom they reprehended. Wee see this by the examples which wee produced before.

Though *Nathan* reprehended *David* with so great liberty; yet when he sawe him reformed, he went in to him, and cast himselfe vpon his knees, & spake to him, and treated him with great reuerence. Though *Elias* reprehended *Achab* so sharpely, yet after, when the King was in his chariot, *Elias* himselfe went running before him, in his company, with much humility, as if he had been a meer seruāt of his. And though

Elizaus

Elizeus confounded the pride of *Ioram* with so great a reprehension; yet instantly with great charity, he did miraculously obtaine water of God, both for him, and all his army.

Though the man of God did so seuerely reprove, and threaten *Ieroboam*; yet seeing that the King had one of his handes dried vp, he besought God with great deuotion, and obtained health for him. Though the great *Saint Iohn Baptist*, did with so vehement words, declare the malice of the *Pharises*, and *Saduces*; yet he did it but by way of admiration, and praise of the power, and goodness of God, who had moued such obstinate, and blind sinners to make some change of their liues; and instantly with great charity, and zeale, for the saluation of their soules, he exhorted and animated them,

them, to doe workes, worthy of penance, to the end that their cō-
uersion might proue solid and
with perseuerance. And though
Saint Steuen did sharply reprove
the *Scribes*, and *Pharises*; yet in-
stantly he prayed to Almighty
God for them, with a most ar-
dent affectiō of loue, euen whilest
they were stoning him. And
though *S. Peter*, did with wordes
full of weight, detest the Simony
of *Simon Magus*, yet instātly being
full of pittý, he admonished him
to doe penance, to the end that
God might pardon that great
wickednes of his. And though *S.*
Paule did checke those great de-
ceits, and the peruerse life of *Eli-*
mas, the sorcerer, yet instantly he
vsed much charity towards him.
For obtaining first, that God
would strike him blind, he would
not haue that blindnes to be per-
petuall,

peruall, as the wicked man deserued; but onely that it might last for a while: that so, being induced by that punishment he might come to vnderstand his owne sinne, and so doe penance for the same.

In this sort haue the Saints discovered cleerly, that those sharpe reprehensions, whereby they corrected grieuous finnes, were vsed by them with great tendernes, & sweetnes of loue; and that, whilest in the exteriour, they shewed themselves so strict, and free in their reprehensions, they did euen then, in the most interiour of their own hearts, humble and despise themselves, as Saint Gregory noteth in these wordes. Holy men doe not shew themselves so resolute, and free, when they reprove the powerfull men of this world, as presuming vpon themselves, nor to the

the end that men should render and submit themselves to them through the feare of man; but the great rectitude of heart, which they haue, makes them vse that holy liberty; & euen whilest they vse it, they conserue themselves in humility; and reprehending the crimes of sinners, with great strength of mind, they iudge themselves, examining their owne faults with great curiosity and care, and they place themselves in their owne account below all others. This is said by Saint Gregory. And by this true explication which wee haue made, it remaineth very cleare, that the serious and seuerer reprehensions, wherewith *Christ* our Lord & his Saints haue corrected the great crimes of sinners, are not contrary to that *Benignity*, which he taught vs, but are full of the dearnes & sweetness of true *Charity*.

THE

THE XVII. CHAPTER.

Of the Benignity, WhereWith a Christian is to be glad of the good of his neighbour, and to approve and praise the same: and of the example, Which Christ our Lord gaue vs thereof.

ONe of the principall things (besides those whereof wee haue spoken) which belong to the vertue of *Benignity*, and the sweet manner of conuersing with our neighbours is, to be glad of their good, and to praise them; yet with that moderatiō, which prudence requireth, and to that end which *Charity* seeketh. For this maketh a seruant of God to be amiable and sweet; and thus he augmenteth *Charity*, towards his neighbours, & he groweth more
able

Of Benignity. Chap. 17. 193

able to be of vse to soules. For by this meanes, his instruction and admonition, will be the better receiued, and the example of his good life better allowed: and he will haue more efficacy to moue others. So saith the worthy Doctor, and Bishop *Guilielmus Parisiensis*. Benignity is the loue of anothers good; and wee call those men *Benigne*, who as soon as they discover a good thing in their neighbours, doe instantly loue it, and loue him for it; and from hence it growes, that they praise, and set him forth in wordes.

For the exercise of this vertue, there is need of great consideration, and much discretion, and light from heauen. For as by the vse therof with moderatiō, being directed to the right end, it is of great profit, and edification towards the encrease of vertue; so

I

vsing

vſing it without moderation, and without rectitude of intention; it is both very hurtfull to his ſoule, who praiſeth, and to his alſo who is praiſed. For this reaſon, Saint *Bonauenture* approueth this ſaying of *Seneca*, praiſe that with moderation, which is praiſe worthy; & diſpraiſe that, which is blamable, with more moderation. For ſuperfluity of praiſe is liable to reproof, as wel as tēperate diſpraiſe.

Well then, let vs goe on declaring the error, which is committed, and the hurt which groweth, by inordinate praiſe and the manner & intention which praiſe muſt haue, to the end that it may be truly giuen according to vertue.

For a man to praiſe his neighbour, for that which is naught, is a great ſinne; and not onely doe they fal into it, who praiſe a man for ſome reuenge, which he may haue

haue taken of an enemy; or for
 hauing affrōted that person, who
 did him iniury by some word, or
 for hauing vttered some carnall
 speech, performing some actiō of
 that kind: but they also who praise
 sūptuous buildings, superfluous
 humours & gifts, curious & rich
 cloathes, delicious & costly dyer;
 and all that which hath any tin-
 cture of vanity and pride, and
 the regalo of this flesh & blood,
 and the loue of the world. For all
 these thinges, are ill, and hurt-
 full to the soule of a Christian;
 who, to the end that he may get
 to heauen, *must deny himselfe, and*
imbrace the Crosse of Christ our Lord.
 To all these flatterers who praise
 that which they should reprehēd,
Esay chap. 5. saith, Woe be to them,
Who praise Wicked thinges, as if they
were good; and Who bould the dark-
nes of error for the light of truth; and

*true light for darkenes; and who esteem
the bitter life of sinners, to be sweet; and
the sweet life of vertue, to be bitter.*

In like manner, it is vicious
for a man to praise temporall, &
naturall thinges, as if they were
the greatest, & principall gifts of
God; as riches, nobility, strength,
and beaurty of the body. For these
are blessings of little value, and
they make not a man to be bet-
ter in himselfe, or more estimable
in the sight of God: & such praise
breeds much hurt to the soule, for
it makes a man greatly loue and
praise those thinges which he
should despise, & from which he
should estrange his heart. The
holy scripture condemneth this
vice saying, doe not praise men
for the corporall beauty which
they haue; nor despise them for
their poore, & meane apparance.
Consider that the Bee, being but
a very

a very little creature, giueth so excellent a fruite, as that it is the most sweet of all sweet thinges; for there is nothing more sweet, then hony. The meaning is, that as the little Bee, hath efficacy to produce such a fruite; so may a little body, & a meane presence, haue much vertue. And that which the Holy Ghost saith of the beauty of the body, he will haue vs vnderstand of all other naturall, and temporall gifts, which are of so little value, that a man is noe further worthy of estimation or praise for them, the if he had them not; but onely so farre forth, as there may result some profit to the soule thereby. This was taught vs, both by the example, and diuine wordes of *Christ* our Lord. For a certaine deuoute womã, hauing seen his miracles, and hauing heard his doctrine,

etrine, was not able to conteine herselfe, but that she must needes praise that Mother aloud, who had brought forth such a Sonne, saying; *Blessed is the wombe, which bare thee, and the breasts which gaue thee sucke.* But Christ our Lord gaue her this answer; *Nay, rather blessed are they who heare the word of God, and keepe it.* By which wordes he discovered to vs, how that free & gratuite blessing, whereby the most sacred Virgin was made Mother of the naturall Sonne of God, did not alone, and of it selfe make her happy or blessed, nor worthy of the reward of heauen: nor more great in the sight of God; but the vnspeakeable vertue, and suauity, and grace, whereby Almighty God did exalt, and dignify her, for such an office: & that which afterward he gaue her, in regard of so high a dignity,

nity, was the thing which made her so truly happy.

If then so admirable a gift, as that was, did not deserue great praise for it selfe alone, but for that vertue and sanctity which went in company thereof: how much more, must all temporall blessings, and gifts of nature, which in themselves are so poore and perishing, be vnworthy of praise; but onely so farre forth, as they may be found to assist, and concurre towards the good of the soule?

So saith Saint *Chrysostome*, declaring these wordes of *Christ* our Lord. By this sentence, *Christ* our Lord did make vs know, that it would not haue profired the *Virgin*, to haue brought forth the Sonne of God, if shee had not withall, been endowed with that faith, and incomparable sanctity

which thee had. And therefore, as I said, if so great a dignity, would not haue profited the *bleſſed Virgin*, without the verue, and ſanctity of her ſoule; how much more cleare is it, that it will ſerue vs to little purpoſe, before Almighty God, to haue Saints to our Fathers, or ſonnes, or kindred, or ſuch other externall gifts; if withall, wee haue not goodnes and verue, and doe not lead a ſpirituall life? For this is that which maketh men to be of value, & worthy of praiſe, in the ſight of God.

It is alſo an errour, and fault of flattery, to praiſe our neighbour for any vertue, which he may haue, and thereby to delight and comfort him principally, for the temporall gaine and profit, which he hopeth to receiue of him. For the praiſe of true vertue, which principally is to be ordeined

deined to some spirituall good,
and to the service of God, is or-
deined by him to his owne pri-
uate interest, which is a sinnefull
thing; & so much the more grie-
uous it will be, as there is more
inordinatenes in the thing. And
when it is very great, that will be
fulfilled in their persons, which
is spoken of by the Psalmist, *Psal.*
2. God will defeate and destroy,
the strength and authority of
them, who desire and procure to
please, and giue gust to men: and
haue that for their end, not look-
ing vp towards God, but downe
vpon their owne private interest
and humour. Especially they who
procure to please worldly men,
forbearing to doe those things
which they owe to God, in respect
of them: these indeed, shall be
confounded; and put to shame,
by Almighty God. For both in

this life, euen all their temporall hopes shall prooue vaine; and besides, in the other life, they shall be fulfilled with shame, and deliuered ouer to eternall torments.

Besides it is a defect, and the fault of soothing, to praise a man either for his wit, or learning, or for the talents, and parts which he hath: yea or euen for his true vertue; when it is likely, that through his weakenes, or vnmortified ill inclination he may fall into pride, and vaine complacence in himself, or into any other prejudice of his soule. Saint *Augustine* obserued this, in these wordes. A hard thing it is, that some little impurity of errour, doe not stick to the hart of a man, (euē though it be cleane) vpon the praises of another; vnles indeed he should haue it so very cleane, as that he should take no gust in them, nor

be touched by any vapour of the; and vnles the praise which they giue him, should more content him for the good of them, who praise him, then for the comfort, or honour, or estimation, which may growe thereby to himselfe. And the he may know, that their praise of him, is profitable to the, if in their life they honour not him, but God; not fastning their mindes vpon him, by the praise, & honour, which they giue him, but rising vp by him, towards Almighty God, whose most sacred temple euery man is, who liueth well. So that it may be fulfilled in him, which is spoken of, by the Psalmist; My soule shall be praised by such, as are good; not in it selfe but in our Lord; that is to say, for the gifts which it hath of our Lord, and for the glory of the same Lord.

This is the danger to which they are ordinarily subiect, who are much praised by men; vnles they be possessors of true and solid vertue, whereby they may resist vaine complacence, and refer the praise to the Author of all good things, which is God. For so saith the holy Scripture; *Better is it, to be corrected by a discreet and wise man, then to be praised by an imprudent man, who with his smooth kinde of praising leaues vs in error.* And declaring the danger wherin man is, when he who praiseth, doth not obserue the moderatiō, and end which ought to be kept. *Saint Hierome* said; There is nothing which doth so easily infect, and corrupt the hearts of men as flattery; and the tongue of a flatterer doth more hurt, then the sword of a persecutour.

Another fault is also committed
sed

ted in praising some, when it is for the dispraise of others. A man will not dare expressely to speake ill of his neighbour, especially to one who hath auersion from hearing it; and therefore to doe it the more couertly, he doth it by meanes of praising another man for the same vertues and gifts of his; and then the detracter would haue it thought, that the man whom he meaneth to dispraise, doth want those vertues; or else is subiect to the contrary defects. Saint *Chrysostome* noteth this vice, in these wordes: We doe many good thinges; but not allwaies with a good minde. Wee praise many; but not to the end, that we may speake well of them, but to detract and speake ill of others. Now that which wee say is good, because we praise vertue in another; but the minde, wherewith

with wee say it, is infected with sinne, and set on worke by Satan: for wee pretend not to doe him good, whom wee praise, but hurt to him whom wee dispraise.

These are the defects, and vices, which growe by praisinge others, when it is done without discretion and moderation; and without that end to which it ought to be addressed; and so it leaueth to be vertue, as is turned into the vice of flattery. And now wee will declare, how praise is to be vsed, to the end that it may be a fruite of the vertue of *Charity* & *Benignity*. And wee will produce some examples, which *Christ* our Lord shewed vs, concerning the manner and intention, which we were to hould in praisinge our neighbours.

THE

THE XVIII. CHAPTER.

*Of the intention, and moderatiō, wher-
with we are to praise vertue in our
neighbours: and of the examples
which Christ our Lord gave vs
thereof.*

IT is a thing both lawfull and
very pleasing to Almighty
God, for a man to praise his
neighbours, for the good he hath
done; to the end that being prai-
sed, they may loue vertue so much
the more, and be animated to the
exercise thereof; and not be dis-
maied by the troubles, and diffi-
culties, to which a vertuous life
is subiect. And this is principally
to be done, towards men, who
are but beginners in the way of
vertue; and who are weake, and
of little heart; for such persons
have

haue the greater need of helpe. Yet euen this praise must be giuen with the moderation afore-said; in such sort, as that it may profit, and not hurt the party praised; but may edify, and induce him to a loue and estimation of vertue, and not to a presumption in himselfe, and a loue of vanity. For the obtaining of this end, the praise must be giuen in words, which may not greatly exaggerate, or amplify the vertue; but plainly declare the truth, and his approbation thereof. Let vs see some exâples, which *Christ* our Lord gaue of this. *Nathaniell* came to *Christ* our Lord, *John 1.* being brought to him by *Saint Philip*. This *Nathaniell*, was a man full of vertue, & very obseruant of the lawe; and came in doubt, whether or no *Christ* our Lord were the true *Messias*, as *S. Philip* had

had said he was. And drawing neer, our Lord looked vpon his disciples; and said in the hearing of Nathaniell: *Behould here a true Israelite, in whom there is no guile.* As if he had said; Behould here a man truly good, not dissembling or counterfeit; but that vertue which he sheweth in his exteriour fashion, and publicke conversation, which is subiect to the sight of men, is possesst by him in the secret, & most interiour part of his heart, which is seen by Almighty God.

This was a true, and moderate praise, and much good grew to Nathaniell by it; for therby he vnderstood, that *Christ* our Lord knew the secrets of his heart, and he was certified of it so much the more; by the further answer of *Christ* our Lord. For saying to him, *Where knew you mee?* he answered, *I sawe*

I sawe thee, when thou wert vnder the figtree. It should seem that *Nathaniell*, had retired himselfe vnder that tree to pray, or to doe some other good worke; and so he inferring thereby, (as a wise man might well doe,) that *Christ* our Lord knew all thinges, he beleeued perfectly in him; and tooke him for his Master. Let vs deliuer another example of the same truth.

Christ our Lord, *Luke 19.* came into the house of *Zaccheus* the *Publican*; and he mooued him by his wordes, and by his presence, to so great pennance, and change of life: that not onely he resolved to giue ouer all those finnes into which he had fallen, & to restore all that, to the restitution wherof he was obliged; but to render it foure fould; thereby giuing satisfaction for the fault he had com-

com-

mitted, by voluntarily vnder-
going the paine, which the lawe
imposed vpon such persons, as
tooke away the goods of others;
and besides all this, he gaue halfe
his substance to the poore. *Christ*
our Lord perceiuing so good be-
ginnings of a holy life in *Zac-*
cheus, did praise him: by saying
of him, to the standers by; *This*
day, is true saluation wrought in this
house; For the Master and owner
of it, is already a true sonne of
Abraham: not only now by the ex-
traction of flesh and blood; but
by the imitation of his faith, and
vertue. In this sorte therefore,
did *Christ* our Lord praise *Natha-*
niell, who was a new beginner in
his schoole of vertue and good
life, and so also did he praise *Zac-*
cheus. And the praise was true, and
moderate; & it did no more then
declare in plaine wordes, that the
one

one of them, was a man truly good, and the other truly penitent & by meanes of these words, he strengthened and encouraged them, both to perseuer and grow in the good course which they had begunne.

But not only did *Christ* our Lord praise them, who had good intentions, & who were truly good; and vpright and well meaninge soules, as *Nathaniell* already was before, and *Zacchaeus* was growne to be; but he approued, and praised also that good which was said, or done, by such as came to him, euen with an ill minde. There came a man, *Luc. 10.* who was learned in the Lawe, to tempt him, asking *What he was to doe, for the obtaining of evermall life?* *Christ* our Lord demaunded of him, *how it was written in the Lawe?* He answered, *It is written that thou shalt love*
the

the Lord thy God with all thy heart,
and thy neighbour as thy selfe. Our
Lord the said to him, (by way of
allowing & praising what he had
formerly said;) Thou hast answered
well: doe as thou hast said; and as the
Law commaundeth, and thou shalt
obtaine euerlasting life.

There came, another time, a
Pharisy to our Lord, Mat. 22. Marc.
12. in name of all the rest, to see
if he could draw some such an-
swere from him; as whereby he
might calumniare him; and he
asked him, Which was the greatest
commaundment of the law? And Christ
our Lord, hauing answered him,
that it was to loue God with all the
heart; the Pharisy approued the
answere of our Lord, and added
thereunto these words: that to loue
God with all the heart; and the neigh-
bour as ones selfe, was a better worke
and more acceptable to God, then all
the

the Holocausts and other Sacrifices of the Lawe. Then our Lord liking the speech of this man, did praise him saying; *Thou art not farre from the kingdom of God.* Which is as much as to say; Thou art not farre from beleeuing, and obeying the Gospell, and obtaining true saluation. For the knowing of a diuine truth so important, and the approouing it by the supernaturall gift of God, was a disposition for the being conuerted to him: and to acknowledge Christ himselfe, who was sent into the world to saue it.

Christ our Lord, if he would haue encreased his Iustice, vpon these two learned men in the Law, might haue seuerely reprooued the ill mind, wherewith they were come to him; and he might haue discovered the craft, and malice, which they carryed in their hearts;

hearts; for so also they would
 haue vnderstood, that he knew
 all things, and thereby he might
 haue put them to confusion and
 shame. Yet this he would not do;
 but he heard them with admira-
 ble meekenes, and answered their
 questions with supreme *Charity*.
 And he approoued that which
 they had said well, though it were
 very little, and very imperfect;
 and he praised it with strange *Be-
 nignity*: that so he might remooue
 that peruersenes of minde from
 the, which they brought to him;
 and encourage them to encrease
 in the knowledge and loue of
 truth, till at length, they might
 grow subiect to it. And so by this
 true *Benignity*, he changed their
 hearts, and sent them bettered
 from him; and he taught vs with-
 all, that not only we are to praise
 good men, for the true vertue
 which

which they haue, but that we may also praise with moderation, euen in imperfect and wicked men, the good they doe or say; to the end that they may growe to take affection to vertue, and may so detest and driue out of their hearts, the wickednes which they haue, and goe encreasing in the good way begunne; as also to gaine their good will; & to make them beneuolous and kinde; which is a very good disposition, towards the inducing them to receiue in good part the doctrine, which we shall deliuer, and the reprehensions, which we may haue cause to vse. And therefore Saint Gregory aduiseeth, that when they who are endowed with authority, and wisdom for this purpose, reprove sinners, who are pusillanimous & weak, they shal do wel to mingle some sweetnes of praise, with

the sharpenes of correction; that so they may the better admit of the doctrine and reproofe, which is giuen them. The Saint expresseth it in these words. Wee shall better drawe such sinners, as are not peruerse & proud, but weake and poore of heart, to the way of heauen, if whilst we reprehend the euil thinges, which they haue done, wee ioyntly praise those good thinges, which wee know to be in them; to the end that by this meanes, such praise may confirme and strengthen the in their weakenes, who were humbled by that reproofe. Thus did S. Paule proceed with those Christians of *Thessalonica*. For they, hauing fallen into the fault of giuing credit to certaine false Prophets who taught the that the day of iudgment was then to come very suddenly, (whereby they were put

K

into

into much disorder and trouble) before he reprehended this lightnes of theirs, he praised them saying, 2. *Thess.* 1. Wee must giue many thanks to God, for the great encrease of yours faith, which is growing euery day; and for the encrease also of your fraternall charity, which aboundeth in euery one of you; and encreaseth daily, both by your louing, and doing good to one another. But when he had praised them in these & other words, he benignely reprehendeth them saying, *chap.* 2. Wee beseech you brethren, by the coming of Christ our Lord to iudgment, and by the glorious and blessed vnion which wee are all to haue together at that day, that you depart not so easly from giuing credit to vs; and from hauing the true sence of those thinges which you haue learned of vs; and that you be not troubled, or frighted by
what

what others tell you; and in a word that none may haue power to deceiue you; By this diuine artifice, the sacred *Doctour of the nations*, did reprehend them; when first he had comforted and encouraged the by recording that vertue, which he knew to be in them, and the good opinion which he had of them; to the end that, ha- uing cōpunction to, see that they had failed of the good which they had begunne, they might the better accept of the reproofe he gaue them; and so might reforme themselves thereby.

K 1 THE

THE XIX. CHAPTER.

How wee must praise vertue, for the making it be more esteemed: and of the examples which Christ our Lord gaue vs to this purpose.

WEe must also praise the vertue of good men, to declare how great a good that is; and how that which seemeth little and of meane value in the sight of mé, is indeed very great, and hath a most high reward in the sight of God; to the end that other men may esteem greatly of it, and carry much affection to it, & labour hard to acquire it. Let vs deliuer some examples hereof.

Saint Peter Matt. 16. confessed to Christ our Lord that he was the true Sonne of God saying; Thou art Christ the Sonne of the liuing God.

It

It seemed a small matter, and of no merit, that Saint *Peter*, having conuerſed ſo long with *Chriſt* our Lord, & ſeen with his owne eyes, ſo great and ſo euident miracles, and heard ſuch doctrine, & contemplated ſuch an exáple of life; that he ſhould piously incline his heart to believe, that he was the true *Meſſias*, & the naturall Sonne of God. For this did not coſt him the ſhedding of his blood, nor the tormenting of his body with affliction, and penance; but only to produce a pious affect of the will, and to performe an act of obedience in the vnderſtanding. But *Chriſt* our Lord praiſed him, and gaue testimony that this inward act of his was of ſupreme value and eſtimation, in the ſight of Almighty God; and that on earth he ſhould receiue admirable fauours from God for the

same; & that in heauen, he should enioy an immēse reward of glory. And that frō that instār, he might begin to be happy by that certen hope, and pawne, which was giuen him of that infinite good, which he was afterward to possesse, and enioy during all eternity. All this he declared by saying; *Blessed art thou Simon the sonne of Ionas.* for men who are made of flesh and blood, were not able, with al the humane wisdom they haue, to teach thee this truth. My celestiaall Father it is, who hath reueiled it to thee, & vpon thee, will I build my Church, and to thee will I giue the keyes of the kingdome of heauen.

By these words, *Christ* our Lord praised by faith and deuotion of *Saint Peter*; and declared to the world, of how soueraigne value before Almighty God, and how

richly

richly to be rewarded with celestiall and eternall blessings, one single act of vertue may be, which is performed by a iust mā, though it be easily produced, and in a short time, and how little soever it may cost; and especially an interior act of lively faith, which a iust man hath no difficulty at all to performe.

Christ our Lord, being in the Atrium of the Temple *Marc. 12. Luc. 21.* behoulding the who were casting almes into the chest, which was to serue for the reparation of the Temple, for the maintenance of the Priests, and for the relief of the poore; amōgst the rest of them who cast in their almes, which without doubt was then done both by many and in plentifull manner (for it was neer Easter, at which time there came much people to *Ierusalem*, from

all parts ;) there cometh a very poore widow, and casteth into the chest, two of the least little peeces of money or mites . Our Lord seeing her and being pleased to praise her much, for the act which shee had done , and the almes which shee had giuen, called his disciples , and pointing out the woman said thus to them . *This Widow hath cast a greater almes into the chest , and made a greater present to the Temple , then all the rest , who haue giuen almes this day.* And our Lord shewed diuers reasons , why shee had giuen more then any of them. First, because in proportion of her poore condition, it was more for her to giue a mite , then for others to giue store of crownes. And because the rest gaue the almes out of that which did aduance beyond their necessary maintenance; and that they

they gaue not all, but a part thereof; but this widow gaue that which was necessary to her selfe, and shee gaue it all. But the principall reason which he was pleased to signify vnder this was, for that shee gaue her almes, with a greater affection and desire to giue, and with more ardour of charity then al they; which he declared by her hauing giuen all that she had, being in precise necessity thereof, for her owne reliefe.

In this sorte did *Christ* our Lord praise the almes of this poore widow, and by praising her, he manifested to all the children of his Church, how highly the goodworke of a iust person is valued, in the sight of Almighty God; & the great account he makes thereof, and how he will reward it in heauen; and how he meanes not.

to giue the reward according to the quantity of the worke, but according to the good will and loue of God and our neighbour, wherewith it is performed. He will also haue vs learne frō hence, first to esteeme greatly of the good works, which our neighbours do, how little soeuer they may be; and and approue them and praise the, before men, for their edification; and much to value those good men, who doe them, though they be poore, & of meane condition and estate; since God, who sees their hearts, doth prize them much. And secondly, he will haue vs learne by this, to be animated towards the doing of good works, and to exercise the acts of Religion and charity, with much affection, and desire to please God; and to doe more then wee doe; although by reason of our weakness,
and

and our little talent, either of vertue, or goods, or power any other way, our workes be very small; since God hath regard to the good will, wherewith they are done, & to the pious heart, from whence they proceed.

The Apostle Saint *Paul* followed this example of *Christ* our Lord. Who (to animate the *Corinthians*, to giue almes to the Christians, who were in want at *Ierusalem*; and that none of the should omit to giue according to his power, how little soeuer that might be) did praise the vertue and charity, which they of *Macedonia* had shewed to the same Christians, assisting them liberally with almes, according to the power of euery one. And he praiseth them in these wordes, 2. Cor. 8. Wee giue you brethren to vnderstand, the gracious, and liberall

K 6

gifts

gift which God communicated by his goodnes, to the Churches of *Macedonia*, who receauing many grieuous persecutions from the Gentiles, (who afflicted, and affronted, and robbed them of the goods they had) did yet abound with ioy in their very tribulations, and they did not onely accept of them with patience, but with interiour ioy, yea and that a very great ioy, for the loue of *Christ* our Lord, for whom they suffered, and through the hope of celestiaall blessings, which God promiseth to them who suffer for the loue of him. And being poore they were all, according to their weake power and strength, so liberall in giuing, that they did very abundantly discover the pure intention which they had therein, and their great promptitude, and even hunger and thirst to giue,
and

& to please God by doing all the good, that possibly they could, to their neighbours. And I giue testimony to this truth, that not only they gaue willingly all they could, but more then they could; for not onely gaue they of the superfluity, and that which they could conueniēly spare, but they gaue part of those very thinges, which were euen necessary for the very support of their liues.

The Apostle, hauing praised in these wordes, the Charity and mercy of the *Macedonians*, inuitteth the *Corinthians* by the inducement of this example, to doe the like; and he saith, that considering what the Christians of *Macedonia* haue done, I haue perswaded my self to sed *Titus* to you, that this grace which he begun in you, may be finished and perfected by his exhorting, & moouing.

uing you to giue almes to the Christians who suffer in *Ierusalem*; and by procuring, that all men may giue what they can; & that it may be put all together, and sent to *Ierusalem*; as was done by the of *Macedonia*. And he wisheth them moreouer, that euen they, who haue but little to giue, should yet giue some what euen of that little, with a ready minde, and a desirous good will, to giue more if they could. And he affirmeth, and testifieth, on the part of God, that the litle, which they should giue with such affection & good will, would greatly please God, and be much esteemed by him; and be also rewarded according to the goodwill wherewith they gaue. For he saith, if the will be ready and efficaciously prepared to doe good, it is very acceptable and pleasing to God, if they
worke

worke & giue according to what they haue, or can performe; and God doth not require, for the making men acceptable to him, that they should giue or do, what they cannot giue or do.

THE XX. CHAPTER.

How it is fit to praise the vertue of some, thereby to correct the vice of others.

ANother way, which makes our praising others to be very profitable for vs, and pleasing to almighty God, is to praise the vertue, and good workes of them, from whom no such thing had been expected; and thereby to conuince and confound those others, who were not so vertuous, and did not worke so well, notwithstanding that they had greater helps, and were in greater obli-

obligations then the former. Let vs declare this by an example.

There was a *Centurion* (that is to say a Captaine of a hundred souldiers) in *Capharnaum*, *Matt. 8. Luc. 7.* placed there by the Romans; and a Gentile he was, who descended not from Patriarches, & Prophets, but from Gentiles & Idolaters, and from people who had noe knowledge of the true God. This man, by meanes of conuersation, which he had with the Iewes, came to know this truth, that there was one God; and he had taken an affection to his holy Lawe, and to his people of *Israell*; and he loued & cherished them, and built a *Sinagogue* for them, vpon the vnderstanding which he had, that of all the men in the world, these were the professors of true Religion. This *Centurion*, had a seruant whom he greatly loued,

loued, who fell sicke of a pleurisy,
& was growne to the very point
of death. And the seruant being
in those termes, and the Master
hauing heard of the miracles
which had been wrought by *Christ*
our Lord, he conceiued a great
confidence and faith, that if he
desired remedy for that seruant,
he should obtaine it; and he be-
lieued with great assurednes, that
Christ was a Lord so powerfull,
that euen in absence, he could
giue him the life, and health of
his seruant, by the onely com-
maūdment of his word. Not pre-
suming therefore to appeare in the
presence of *Christ* our Lord, (as
holding himselfe vnworthy ther-
of) he interposed the auncient,
and prime men of the Iewes, for
intercessours. These men ther-
fore, in the name of the *Centu-
rion*, desired that he would goe to
his

his house , and cure his seruants: instantly our Lord put himselfe vpon the way, to doe as much as they desired. As soon as the *Cen-
turion* knew that *Christ* our Lord was comminge to his house , he tould him, by meanes of the same intercessours , that in no case he was to doe it ; for that himselfe was vnworthy of so great honour, but he onely prayed, that from thence, he would commaūd by some one word of his, that his seruant might be cured; and that that would serue for his recouery. And this he confirmed by the example of his owne person; for if he, being a weake man, and subiect to the commaūd of another, (who was the Generall of the Army) could yet commaund his soldiers, to dispose themselues here or there , and that accordingly, and instantly the thing was done;
how

how much more could *Christ* our Lord, being so absolute, and of so great power, commaund from wheresoeuer he were, that sicknes and death should be gone, and that health and life should come; and that they would not faile to obey him.

This man, discovered great humility in not presuming once to to appeare in the presence of *Christ* our Lord, but to negotiate by meanes of the Iewes, whom he held for better then himselfe; and by those wordes, he also shewed a great faith. And so *Christ* our Lord, hauing heard this message, shewed to be in admiration, to see so great faith in a Pagan souldier. And turning his countenance to the troupe of Iewes, who followed him, he said; *Verily I say to you, I haue not found so great faith as this, in Israell. And many shall come from*

from the East, and from the West, and from all the parts of the World, out of the nations of the Gentiles, and by meanes of faith; and obedience to my Ghospell, shall sit in company of Abraham, Isaac, and Iacob, and the rest of the Patriarches; and shall raigne with God: and on the other side, they who be the children of the kingdom, which are the Iewes, who descēd from the Patriarchs, and to whom the promise of the Messiah and of his celestiall kingdome was made, shall the most part of them be excluded from that Kingdome, and shut vp into eternall torment.

Christ our Lord praised the faith of the Centurion, for the reproofe of the infidelity of those Iewes, who belieued not in him at all; & of the weak faith of some others, who belieued in him; and to confound them by this example; and

to

to mooue them to penance for their fault, and to perswade with them, who believed not; and to encrease their faith who beleeu-
ued. And so he was pleased to expresse himselfe to this effect; This *Centurion* being a Gentile, and not hauing read the Prophets, nor hauing been brought vp in the Lawe of God, nor in any discipline, but of the warre, and not hauing seene my workes and miracles, but onely heard relation of mee; hath beleeued my truth, and my power, with so great and so firme a faith; and on the other side, the children of *Israell*, who are descended from the Patriarches, & who haue read the Scriptures, and know the Prophecies, which speake of mee; and who were looking for mee, and haue seen my miracles, and heard my doctrine, some of these, haue not belie-

belieued in mee, nor will receiue my truth, but persecute the same; & others haue beleueed it so imperfectly, that none of them hath arriued to so great a Faith as this man hath, and as he confesseth in honour of mee. They I say, notwithstanding the many causes & moriues, which they haue had, to beleue my truth with a perfect faith, haue not beleueed it, as they ought: and this man hauing had so few moriues, as he had to beleue in me, hath beleueed with so great perfection, that he hath farre outstripped all the rest. And therefore this man, though but a Gentile; and all the other Gentiles also, who throughout all the parts of the world, shall be conuerted to mee, and shall be like this man in his faith, and obedience to my word, shall be admitted into the Kingdom of heauen,

uen, in company of the holy Patriarches, whom they haue imitated; and on the other side the children of *Israell*, who according to the extractiō of flesh & blood, descend from Patriarches; if they doe not penance, and reforme their infidelity and disobedience, by true and constant faith, and reall subiection to my commandments, shall be excluded from the Kingdome of heauen, and condemned to eternall torments.

In this sort did *Christ* our Lord praise the faith of the *Centurion*; and thereby did he correct the infidelity, or at least the weake faith of the *Iewes*. And he did it with much reason; for the faith of this man was so great, that some of the Saints conceiue, that he did truly know, and belecue the diuinity of *Christ* our Lord; and that
it

it was couered with the veile of his sacred humanity. For thus saith Saint *Hierome*. The wisdom of the *Centurion* is discovered, in that with the eyes of faith, he saw the diuinity which lay hid vnder that veile of humanity. And the same doth Saint *Augustin* confesse, saying, in the person of the same *Centurion*; If I, being a man subiect to others, haue yet power to commaund; how much more hast thou it, O Lord, whom all the powers of the earth obey and serue?

Wee are to profit by this example of *Christ* our Lord, in praising such seruants of God, as liue in a more eminent degree of vertue, then the state and condition of their life seemeth to exact at their hands; for the admonishing and correcting of others, who, by reason of their vocation, and of the
the

the parts and gifts which God hath bestowed vpon them, were obliged to greater vertue. As when, for the correcting of some Prelate, who may be straight handed in giuing almes, and negligent withall, in the gouernment of his subiects, we may praise some Lord, who being a secular man, is yet most liberall in giuing almes, and most vigilant in procuring that his seruants and vassailes may be vertuous. And as if, for the reproofe and amendment of a Religious man, who were remisse in making Prayer, and doing Penance, and were full of repidity in the exercise of vertue, and imperfect in the performance of his *Obedience*, we should praise a secular Cauallier, for being much giuen to prayer, and diligent in the mortification of himselfe, and full of seruour in

L

the

the exercise of vertue, and very obedient to his Ghostly Father. For we frame the reason after this manner; If a Lord or a Cavalier, being a secular man, be of so great recollection, so great vertue, such purity of life, such diligence in the doing of good workes, his vocation not seeming to bind him altogether to it; how much more reason is it, that a Prelate make himselfe a possessor of these vertues, whom his state obligeth to be a perfect man; and a Religious person, whom his Religion obligeth to procure to be perfectly verruous?

And so to reforme some very wise and learned man, who wanteth spirit and deuotion, we may praise a man who is wholly ignorant, but yet full of the spirit of God, and of true deuotion saying: If this rude creature hauing
so

so little knowledge of God, and of his workes, and mysteries, and being able to vse so little discourse of reason, haue yet so great loue of God, and so great feeling of his goodnes, and of his mysteries, and workes, & so great gust of diuine things, and maketh so great estimation of vertue, and spirituall blessings; how much more is it reason, that a wise and learned man, to whom God hath giuen so great wit, & knowledge, for the comprehending of truth both diuine and humane, and so great light of reason to discourse, and passe by meanes of visible thinges to the knowledge of such as are inuisible, and by the creatures, to come to the knowledge and loue of the Creatour, haue such deuotion, as was said before, or at least procure to haue it?

In this sort did the Apostle S.

L 2

Paule,

Paule, following this example of Christ our Lord, cōmend the Gentiles who were conuerred, for the most excellēt vertues which they had, and the admirable workes they did, and for those most high gifts, which God had communicated to them, by meanes of their faith; to the end that so the Iewes, who were in their infidelity, might know their errour, and be in confusion, for their wickednes; and might be awaked by the vertue of the Gentiles, and encouraged to the incitation thereof. This did he signify by saying, *Rom. II. For as much as I am an Apostle of the Gentiles, and during the whole time that I shall be so, I will honour this ministry, taking paines, and suffering for them, to bring them to the faith who are not yet come to it, and to confirme and perfect them with*
vertues,

Of Benignity. Chap. 20. 245
vertues, and the gifts of God who
haue already receiued it. And by
this meanes, I will procure the
conuerſion of the fewes, who are
of my kinred according to the
fleſh, to the end that they, be-
houlding the moſt abundant fruite
which is produced in the Genti-
les, and the moſt pretious gifts
which God cōmunicated to them
by meanes of their faith, *may be
moued to a holy emulation, and imita-
tion of them, and ſo ſome of them may
be ſaued.*

THE XXI. CHAPTER.

*How wee are to praiſe the vertue of
our neighbours, to defend them ſo,
from ſome vniuſt ſlaunder.*

A Nother very iuſt reaſon, for
which wee muſt praiſe our
neighbours, and commend their
L 3 Vertues,

vertues, and good workes, is to defend them from some slander, or false testimony, or some detraction or affront, wherewith their reputation is vniustly sported, & their good name and the opinion of their vertue obscured. Let vs deliuer an example, which *Christ* our Lord left vs of this truth.

Christ our Lord being in *Bethania*, at supper in the house of *Simon* the leaper, *Ioh. 12. Matth. 26.* *Mary Magdalen* came with an Alablaster box, full of very odoriferous and pretious ointment, & she anointed the feet of our Lord with it, & filled the whole house with the sweet odour. Now *Iudas* began to murmur at this worke, and to speake ill of the holy woman, in that she had wasted the ointmēt, which was of so great value, that it might haue beē sold for three hundred peeces of money, and been.

been giuen to the poore. And the rest of the disciples, seeing the indignation and murmuringe of *Iudas*, and not vnderstanding the roote of malice, from whence it grew, like good simple men conceived that he had reason, for what he said; and were induced by his example, to murmur too, and to reprove that good worke, which *Mary* with so great deuotion, had done.

Now our Lord saw well how the disciples murmured against this holy woman, without all reason; esteeming that to be vitious, which was an act of vertue, and speaking ill of that, which was well done. For being a custome of the country, as it was, to anoint the feet of their guests, with precious ointments, if they were eminent men; it was no euill, but a good worke to doe that, which

was in vse for some good and honest end. For an indifferent actiō, such an one as this was, is made good by addressing it to a vertuous end. But then to this is to be added, the pure intention, and great deuotion, wherewith *Mary* did this worke: for she did it as being moued by piety and religion, to exhibite honour and veneration to our Lord, whom she knew to be worthy of all possible reuerence and respect.

Our Lord therefore on the one side seeing the goodnes of the worke & considering moreouer, the mystery which himself mēt to signify thereby, who had moued her to it; and on the other obseruing the rash iudgment & murmuring of the disciples, and especially of *Iudas*, who was the spring of all that ill, he began to defend the woman, and to praise
the

the good worke which she had wrought, and to discharge the slander, whereby they thought to doe her wrong; saying after this manner; *Why are you troublesome to this woman?* Why are you enraged against her? Why thinke and speake you ill of her worke? leaue her free frō your reproach, and giue her leaue to keep this ointment, for my buriall. His meaning was to say, the bodies of dead men, are according to our custome, to be anointed before they be interred; and this woman would be glad to anoint my body, when I shall be dead; & then will not be able, because that office will be first performed by others, before I be buried; and after that buriall, she shall be preuented by my resurrection. But suffer her to doe that now, which she would doe them; and that she

may signify by this vnction that I am to dy; and that my body will be soon laid in the graue, and she in the meane time, doth but performe that office of piety, which is performed to other dead bodies.

Our Lord said further, *she hath wrought a good worke towards mee;* and it was conuenient that shee should doe it, although by doing it, the price of this ointment were thereby not giuen to the poore. For the poore you shall haue allwaies with you, and so shall you euer haue oportunitie, and occasion to doe good to them: but as for mee, you shall not allwaies haue me with you, in this visible forme; for I am quickly to leaue this world, and to goe to my Father. And I tell you for certaine, that in whatsoeuer part of the world, the good newes of this Ghospell

Ghospell shall be preached; the worke of this woman shall be recounted, and celebrated in her memory, and for her glory in all the parts of the world. And by these words did *Christ* our Lord defend the *Magdalena*, and praise her good worke.

From this example we are first to fetch this fruite, to make great estimation of good workes, how little, how light, and how easy so euer they may be. How easy a thing is it, for a rich woman to buy a pound of pretious ointmēt, for three hūdred peeces of siluer, and to anoint the feet of a holy man therewith; especially of such a Saint as *Christ* our Lord was? For in that he, who was anointed, was so great a Lord, the worke became more sweet, and easy to be performed. Well then, so light and easy a worke as this, for ha-

L 6 uing;

uing been performed by a person who was in the state of grace, and with a pure intention, to serue and please Almighty God, was esteemed so highly, as wee see by *Christ* our Lord, and praised with such Maiesty of wordes; and rewarded with such a high reward, both in heauen and earth. Such value and dignity and excellency haue those good workes, which are done for the loue of God.

If the *Magdalena* had spent, not three hundred peeces of siluer, but three hundred thousand, in the seruice of the world, as in braueries, and vaine dressings, in curious and delitious bankers, and in making some feast, & triumph to giue delight and gust, as louers of the world are wont to doe; all that expence, had been lost, and she had not pleased Almighty God therby; nor had merited any thing

thing is his sight; and there had been no honorable memory thereof continued amongst men. And not reaping any profit by them, shee would haue incurred many faultes, as ordinarily there are, in these thinges, which would haue condemned her, either to the temporary paines of Purgatory, or els to the eternall torments of hell. But now, for hauing spent a little money vpon the seruice of *Christ* our Lord, and for vndergoing that light & sweet labour, in performing that work of piety, with her owne hands, she pleased Almighty God so much, and merited so greatly in his sight, & obtained so much honour throughout the world, that as long as it lasts, she shall be praised, & had in veneration for this worke, by all faithfull Christians; and for all eternity shall be made happy amongst

amongst the Angells in heaven,
with a most high crown of glory.
And so will that be fulfilled which
was said by the wise man; *The me-
mory of iust persons wil remaine amōgst
men, after their death,* and they shall
relate their heroicall deedes, and
exhibite praise, and veneration
to them; whereas the memory
and fame of wicked persons, shall
be full of reproach, and it shall
perish.

Secondly, we are to draw from
this example of *Christ* our Lord,
that when wee see vertuous peo-
ple suffer hurt in their reputatiō,
or good name, whereby their
neighbours were to be edified, &
whereof they are deprived, by the
flaunders, and lies of wicked peo-
ple, wee must defend them by gi-
uing testimony to the truth, and
by praising their good life. And
when men murmur against them
in

in our presence, wee must excuse their innocency, & declare their vertue. And if it so fall out, that we haue any credit with the murmurers; we must procure to mend them, and stop the discourse; and if our aduice by way of speech will not serue, we must shew both by our silence, and by our countenance, that such murmuring is displeasing to vs. This is that which the holy Ghost doth admonish saying, that as the sharpe cold winde coming from the North, hindreth raine, and permits not, through the coldnes thereof, that the cloudes should easily dissolue theselues into water; so doth the reserued and sad countenance, of him who heareth, ty vp the tongue of the murmurer. This saith the *Wise man* in the *Proverbs*, who was instructed by the Holy Ghost. And the reason

son is, because when the murmurer sees, that they who heare him looke cheerfully vpon the matter, he thinkes he pleaserh them, & that they giue him a glad eare; and he taketh so much the more heart, and liberty to murmur: but whē he findeth, that they shew him an ill countenance, he vnderstands by that, that the discourse pleaseth not; but that they are vnwilling to heare it, & this he markes, and so he begins to giue ouer murmuring.

THE XXII. CHAPTER.

*How wee ought to praise wise men,
When they are vertuous, to the end
that others may profit by their ex-
ample and doctrine.*

BESIDES those reasons before expressed, there is yet another,

other of great force, why wee ought to praise the seruants of God; and it is, to the end that our neighbours hauing notice of their vertue and parts, may profit more, both by their doctrine, and by the example of their life. This praise belongeth chiefly, to persons who are much knowne, and haue authority, or publicke office, as Prelates, Iudges, Preachers, Cōfessors, Religious men, Priests, and rich and noble persons; for vpon the vertue, & prudence, and wisdom of such as these (who are as the heads, and hearts) dependeth the vertue of the people: and so the good life, and incorrupt doctrine of these seruants of God, being generally knowne, and commended, the rest of men doth profit by it so much the more, and are more edified by their good speeches, and
ver-

vertuous examples; and therefore to praise such persons, with that discretion which is fit, is a thing very acceptable to God, and very profitable for the gaining of soules. Let vs relate an example, which *Christ* our Lord gaue vs hereof.

The disciples of Saint *Iohn Baptist*, came to *Christ* our Lord in their Masters name, *Mat. 11. Luc. 7.* to know if he were that *Christ*, who was to come; that is to say, if he were the *Messias*, who had been promised by Almighty God, for the saluation of the world. And our Lord hauing answered this question, by the workes he did, which was by working the miracles which were prophesied of the *Messias*, and by preaching that doctrine which belonged to him to teach, and publish, he dispatched them away saying; Tell *Iohn* what
you

you have seen and heard. When the disciples of Saint Iohn were gone, our Lord began to celebrate the diuine praises of the same Saint Iohn, and to proclame his admirable vertues, saying; *What went you out to see in the desert? Went you perhaps to see some reed, or cane, which is shaken with euery winde? or some man set forth in soft, and delicate apparell? He meât as followeth; you went not out to see a light, or vnconstant person, who is mooued by euery passion, or interest; but a most constant man, and who perseuereth with admirable resolution, in the truth, which he preacheth; and in that holy life which he began to lead. And you shall evidently see, that inconsistent and light persons, who are mooued with passions, or by the interests of this world, be allwaies in loue with regaloës, and delicacies*

cies in their food, their cloathing, and their habitation, and are desirous of wealth, and haue recourse to the houses of great men, where these things are found in abundance. But in *John*, you shall see nothing of this, but a life of great penance and austerity, & very abstinent, & estranged from all manner of regalo, and wholly deprived & destitute of all earthly goods. For his habitation, is in the dry and horrid desert: his bed, is the hard ground: his garment is a sharpe hairecloth, made of camells haire: his food is dry locusts: his drinke running water; and his continuall exercise, is to pray, and contemplate in that desert, and to baptise and preach penance, in the riuer of *Iordan*. He saith moreouer of him; *And what went you out to see in the desert? Was it perhaps some Prophet? Verely I say*

I say to you, that he is more then a Prophet. For this is he, of whom the eternall Father said, Whilest he was speaking to his sonne, as is recorded in Malachias; Behould I send my Angell before thy presence, to prepare the way for thee. I tell you for a most certaine truth, that there was not borne of woemen a greater, then Iohn the Baptist; but yet he, who is the least in the kingdom of heauen is greater then hee. Which signifieth, according to the best exposition; He who for his age, & the office of humility which he exerciseth, and in opinion of the people is the poorest member of the Church, (which was our Lord himselfe the true Messias) is both in dignity, and sanctity, greater then he.

Saint Iohn had preached penance to the people, and exhorted men to the exercise of all vertue, and had giuen expresse testimony

mony of *Christ* our Lord, affirming that he was the *Messias*. And now, to the end, that by sending this message, whereby they asked of *Christ* our Lord, if he were the *Messias*, the people might not suspect that he made any doubt, as some inconstant might doe, of that which formerly he had testified, and of that which now he questioned, but only in regard both of his owne disciples, and of al that people (that so they might forsake the ignorance, wherein they were, & remain more confirmed in their faith; & not thinke that he demaunded it in regard of the ignorance wherein himself was) for this reason, did *Christ* our Lord extoll him afterward, with so illustrious praises, and testified with so great asseueratiō, the constancy and purity of his life, and the eminency of his person

son and dignity. And he proued this, both by the experience of what they sawe, and by the testimony also of a Prophet: to the end that they might be settled in the great belief, which they ought to haue of his truth, and sanctity; and that so, they might profit by the doctrine, which he had preached, and the example of life which he had shewed.

In this sort are wee to praise men for their vertues, after the example of *Christ* our Lord: because their life and doctrine concerne the good of the faithfull, to the end that their wordes of counsell, may be more efficacious, and their example more profitable to all men. Thus did *Saint Paule* proceed; who, resolving to send *Timothy*, a most faithfull instrument of the Gospell, to preach and administer holy things,

mony of *Christ* our Lord, affirming that he was the *Messias*. And now, to the end, that by sending this message, whereby they asked of *Christ* our Lord, if he were the *Messias*, the people might not suspect that he made any doubt, as some inconstant might doe, of that which formerly he had testified, and of that which now he questioned, but only in regard both of his owne disciples, and of al that people (that so they might forsake the ignorance, wherein they were, & remain more confirmed in their faith; & not thinke that he demaunded it in regard of the ignorance wherein himself was) for this reason, did *Christ* our Lord extoll him afterward, with so illustrious praises, and testified with so great asseueratiō, the constancy and purity of his life, and the eminency of his person

son and dignity. And he proued this, both by the experience of what they sawe, and by the testimony also of a Prophet: to the end that they might be settled in the great belief, which they ought to haue of his truth, and sanctity; and that so, they might profit by the doctrine, which he had preached, and the example of life which he had shewed.

In this sort are wee to praise men for their vertues, after the example of *Christ* our Lord: because their life and doctrine concerne the good of the faithfull, to the end that their wordes of counsell, may be more efficacious, and their example more profitable to all men. Thus did *Saint Paule* proceed; who, resolving to send *Timothy*, a most faithfull instrument of the Gospell, to preach and administer holy things,

thinges, at *Philippus* a Citty of *Macedonia*, doth praise him first in a letter, which he writeth to the *Philippians*, wherein he testifieth his vertues, saying, I hope in the mercy of *Christ* our Lord that I shall very shortly be able to send *Timothy* to you. And I haue designed to send him in particular, because I haue none other, Who is so agreeable to mee, and so of one heart with my selfe, and who with so pure loue and true charity, hath so particular a care of your good.

These and other praises, did *S. Paule* deliuer of *Timothy*; to the end that the *Philippians*, might receiue him with great estimation of his sanctity, and zeale, and might profit by him. And he did the like, when he resolved to send *Titus* a seruant of *Christ* our Lord, and a preacher of the Gospell to them of *Corinthus*: for first he praised him, saying to this effect; I
gine

giue great thanks to God, for inspiring the heart of Titus with the same desire, that I haue, and for hauing kindled him with the same loue and endued him with the same desire of your spirituall profit, which he gaue to mee. With these & other wordes, Saint Paule praised Titus, to the end that his labours might prooue of greater spirituall profit to the Corinthians. And after this manner, are we also to praise Prelats, Preachers, Gouvernours of Cities, Pastours of soules, Religious men, and Priests, and all such as haue publicke office, and authority ouer the people, when they clearly expresse true vertue in their liues. For when they are knowne for such, and that they are wise, and diligent in doing their duties, they shall profit the people more, and especially such families thereof, as conuerse with
M them.

them Let vs praise (saith Ecclesiasticus) such men as are excellently glorious, aboue the rest.

THE XXIII. CHAPTER.

*Of the rule which wee are to hold,
When vpon the aforesaid reason,
We shall praise the seruants
of God.*

BVt in affoording this praise, wee must obserue these directions, and rules of discretion. That whē we praise another man, not to the end of encouraging him, or moouing him to the practise and proceeding in vertue, or for the perswading him to the doing of some good worke, but for the good, and profit of others, that so his vertue and wisdom being knowne, and much esteemed, his neighbours, who heare, and

and discourse thereof, may profit by his example, instruction, advice and government (which is the case wherof we are speaking;) we must not then praise the party in his own presence, nor yet before his familiar friends, who already know his parts, and who are likely to tell him what they have heard; but onely before such others, who it may concerne to know his virtues and parts, to take profit by him. So did *Christ* our Lord, when he praised Saint *Iohn*; for he did it in his absence; and he staid for the doing of it, till the disciples of Saint *Iohn* were gone.

This rule must wee also hold, that so we may take from the servant of God, whom we praise, all occasion of yaine complacence, and estimation of himselfe, especially when the praises happen to be great, in respect that the par-

ties vertues, and parts are greatly worthy to be praised. For although it be true, that many servants of God, who haue laid the rootes of humility very deeply in their hearts, and who, by long experience and much light from heaven, haue wel vnderstood and penetrated the weakenes of man, are free from this danger, & take no occasion of vanity by it, but contemne themselves so much the more; yet this is not euery bodies case. Howsoeuer we see indeed, that it happened in the case of Saint *Ambrose*, when once a diuell (speaking by the mouth of a posselt person) had a minde to moue him to pride, and began to cry out thus aloud, *Ambrose torment mee*; For then the Saint vnderstood the diuells craft, & what he pretended by praising him. But he did not onely not growe proud

proud by occasion thereof, but he humiliated himselfe so much the more; and said; *Hold thy peace, thou diuell, for it is not Ambrose who torments thee, but the faith of the Saints in God, and thine owne enuy. Know that Ambrose will not growe proud, vpon thy praises.* This passed with Saint Ambrose, and the like happened to Saint Marcellus, the Abbot. For this man, had a gift from God, to cast out diuells; and they brought diuers posselt persons to him; and the diuells desiring, by their infernall craft, to hoise vp the Saint, inro pride with praise, they cried out thus aloud, *Marcellus, doe thou commaund vs to depart out of these bodies, for thou hast power ouer vs; and this they repeated often.* The Saint vnderstood the malice of the diuells, & would not send them out vpon their commaundmēt; but taking

occasion from that speech, to humble him selfe so much the more, and lifting vp his eyes to heauen, he begged of *Christ* our Lord, that he would cast them out saying thus; *O Lord, preserve this worke of thy hands;* & he continued praying so long, that the diuells departed out of the bodies.

Though this be so, and that many great seruants of God, are settled so firmly, and solidly in the truth of humility, that humane praises moue them not at all, but rather they humiliate themselves the more by occasion thereof; yet there are others, who though indeed they be the seruāt of God and haue very excellent vertues, and gifts from heauen, and are worthy to be praised; yet notwithstanding they haue some weaknes this way, and are subiect to the danger of growing proud vpon.

upon humane praise, and especially whē they are praised much. And this is the vsuall case, and which ordinarily happeneth, that euen good men are subiect to this weaknes, and are exposed to this danger. And a man may clearly see, what force those praises haue to make men giddy, & how much occasion they minister of making them fall into vaine complacēce and pride. First, in that the diuells, who are so great and wise Masters in doing ill, did take the meanes of praising, and publishing the power which Saint *Ambrose*, and Saint *Marcellus* had ouer them from Almighty God, as the likeliest way to make them fall into pride. And this truth may bee also seene, by the great diligence, which the Saints haue euer vsed, in flying from the praises of men, for the dāger which they

M 4. knew

knew to be therein, and the feare they had to fall thereby.

Sturium doth relate in the life of the blessed and most holy man *Iohn*, who was a Prior of *Chanons Regular*; that fearing the danger of praise, he fled from it after an extraordinary manner. He went to do a certaine office of charity, to certaine woemen the seruants of God, who were retired from the world; and one of them, who was there shut vp, receaued a *Reuelation* of his going thither; and therein, our Lord had declared to them, the great sanctity and merit of that seruant of his. Now there was here no necessity to recount that reuelation in praise of his sanctity: for it was not made to her for the profit of the Saint; but to the end that they might profit by his coming thither, so much the more, by how much more

more they were certified of his sanctity. And therefore, as soon as the Saint heard her begin to speake thereof, he found that there was danger of conceiuing some vaine complacence, or estimation of himselfe; and it troubled him much to heare such praises of his vertue; and he made her a quicke answer, and concluding the busines in few wordes, went immediatly away. For the danger that he found, to heare humane praise, made him resolute nor to stay, where there was so great estimation of the holy manner of his life.

Saint William, who of Duke of Aquitania, came to be a most holy Monke, and a Father of many Monkes, was much praised by men, for his many vertues, & the great miracles which he wrought. This put him to extreme paine,

and he would faine haue auoided the working of miracles, through the feare he had of being praised. And *Theobaldus* the Bishop, saith in his life; That in regard he was not able to endure humane praise, he went into a solitary place, & and berooke himselfe there to a little cottage in company of a disciple of his, doing penance there, and leading a celestial life, till he made a most holy end.

The Saints therefore haue well vnderstood, the danger which ordinarily there is in human praise; especially when they are given with great honour, and estimation of sanctity. And for this reason, when we praise the seruants of God, for the benefit of others, wee are to doe it, if wee can, in their absence.

Wee are also to doe so, for another reason, which is, to secure
our

our selues from the note and suspicion of being flatterers. For when wee praise our neighbour, for the profit of his soule, namely to deliuer him from pusillanimity, and to animate him to verue, the necessity which then ther is of praising him in his presence, will free vs from being suspected to doe it out of flattery: but when wee praise him for the good of others, if wee doe it without necessity in his presence, it draweth the suspicion of flattery with it; and therefore as much as we may, wee must procure to giue such praise in absence. And this also did *Christ* our Lord teach vs, in this praise of Saint *Iohn*. For vpo this reason, he staid till the disciples of the Saint were gone, to auoid all suspicion of flattery. So said Saint *Chrysostome*; Therefore did *Christ* our Lord praise Saint

John, whē his disciples were gone,
that so it might not seeme to be
flattery.

THE XXIV. CHAPTER.

*Of other rules which wee must ob-
serue when wee praise men: that is;
that wee praise some, without of-
fence to others: and that wee doe it
in moderate words.*

ANother rule which wee are
to obserue in these praises,
is to praise some in such sorte, as
that we giue no offence to others,
by diminishing the vertues and
parts of some, to encrease those
of other folkes. And therefore we
must procure as much as we may,
not to make cōparisons between
some and others; telling the
faultes of this man, and the abi-
lities of that other; abasing and
viliſ

vilifying some, and exalting and magnifying other men; and of this we must especially take heed, when they of whom wee speake, are aliue.

Christ our Lord gaue vs an example of this rule, in the praise which he vttered of Saint Iohn; for he said not of him that he was the greatest of all them who had been borne of women; but that no man had been borne before that time, greater then hee; thereby leauing men in liberty, to thinke that others, might be equall to him. And out of this general serēce, he brought that exception which was fit, saying, *that the least of the kingdome of beauen was greater then he.* And although some vnderstand thereby the least of the Angells, who are blessed in heauen; yet the more certaine exposition is (as we haue said before) that he vnderstood him.

him who was *the least*, by humility, which is, that Saint of Saints; and he who is the fountaine of all sanctity, of whom Saint Iohn Baptist himselfe said, *that he was not worthy to vntie the latchet of his shoe.*

Wee also must follow this rule of prudence in praising men, who are praise worthy. For if we praise men for the loue of God, & being moued by charity as wee ought; the same charity will tell vs, that we must doe it without offending any body, and that so wee must comfort, and honour some with our praise, as that wee doe not offend, or dispraise others by sleighting their vertues.

The last rule which wee are to hold is that wee praise men, euen although they be Saints, with moderation, and temperance, & in modest wordes; in such sorte that wee exceed not the limies,
either

either of truth, or of necessity, by our enforcing, or exaggeration thereof. For if wee praise a man, either to make him friendly, or to animate him to the doing of good, or to perswade him to the beleefe of any truth, or to the practise of any vertue, or to gaine credit for him with other folkes; it will be fit to speake so well of him as is necessary, for the obtaining of that end, which is pretended, & to worke that good effect which is desired; and this is sufficient, laying other praises and exaggerations aside, which neither are necessary, nor profitable to the edification of others.

This moderation which wee ought to vse in praising men, is taught vs by the holy Scripture saying, do not praise a man, till he be dead. He doth not here prohibite all praise of such as liue; for
in

it is clearly lawful, and necessary, and pleasing to God, to praise men, whilst they liue, as we haue declared already; and the Scripture it selfe saith; *The faithfull man, shall be much praised.* But he meaneth, that wee must not praise such as are still liuing, with a compleat and perfect praise, as if they were secure, and confirmed in the state of grace, as they are to be, in heauen. And so that, *doe not praise*, doth signify as the Greeke letter sheweth; *do not beatify or proclame any man for blessed before his death*: which sentence grew into this Prouerbe; *Let no man count himselfe happy before he dy.* And therefore wee are admonished by this sentence, not to praise any man, as absolutely blessed, or entirely happy in this life: but when wee say *he is happy*, wee are to vnderstand it with this condition or limitation;

mitation; that he is happy according to the present iustice, wherein he liues; or happy according to his present state and disposition: and, in fine, that he is happy in hope. For as long as a man liueth, it is euer fit for him to be affraid of falling, and to be in doubt of perseuering. Yet this takes not from vs, but that wee may praise good men; but onely that our praise of the must be moderate, as of me who may faile in the course of vertue, wherein they are; & may fall vpon that sinne in which they are not; til the good ed of a happy death, doe secure their vertue, & ratify their good life. This did S. Ambrose declare in these words; *He is not instantly happy, who hath now no sinne in his soule; for it is not said without cause, that we must praise no man before his death.* And it is certaine that whilest a man liues, he
may

may faile; and therefore till he dy, he must not be celebrated with any praise, as determinate and certaine, and which cannot be reuoked. He, who after the end of a good life, hath died well, may be iustly termed happy: for already he enioyeth the society of the blessed, with a security, which is perfect.

THE XXV. CHAPTER.

Of the rules, which they are to keepe, who are praised; that so they may be at no preiudice, but receiue profit thereby.

THEY who praise others, are to obserue those rules, whereof I haue spoken. Let vs now say somewhat, of the rules which are to be kept by them, who are praised; remitting the rest to some other

other place.

The first rule is, that a man (for as much as concernes himselfe, that is to say, his owne honour, his estimation and his comfort) must not desire or seeke the praise of men. For to desire praise vpon these reasons, and for this end is a vaine and vicious thing, which spotteth, and defileth the heart of man, and disquieteth and disturbeth it, and maketh it subiect to euery change. For as all human things are subiect to alteration; and one man praiseth, and another man dispraiseth; one exalteth, and another abaseth; one honoureth, and another dishonoureth his neighbour: from hence it groweth, that the miserable heart, which loueth praise, is now cheerfull, and then sad; now refreshed & then dismaied; and neuer doth enioy strength or rest.

rest. On the other a mā who cares not for the praises of men, but despiseth and auoides them; and, for his part, desireth onely to be approoued, and praised by Almighty God, whose iudgment is right, and vpon whose approbation and praise, our saluation dependeth, and who contents himselfe with this testimony, doth proceed like a iust man, who loueth true iustice, and not vanity; and so keepes his heart quiet, and firmly set vpon goodnes, because he resteth himself vpon God, who is not subiect to any change. So saith Saint *Chrysostome*. The wicked man is delighted with the praises of men, and though he haue not the vertue, for which he is praised, yet he holds his peace, and is glad of it. But the iust man flies from praise, and though he haue that vertue for
which

which they praise him, & though he know thereby, that he who praised him, said true; yet still he hath no minde to be praised. And in another place, the same Saint saith; Nothing makes men so vaine, and light, as the appetite of glory, & of the praise of men, and so nothing maketh them so firme and constant, and strong, as the cōtempt of all the honour, and praise of this world.

But now since it is not lawfull to like the praises of men for his owne honour, and temporal comfort; let vs see, whether it be lawfull for him to like, and desire them for the animating, and encouraging himselfe thereby, to the exercise of vertue. We therefore say first, that this may bee lawfull in some case, and with some moderation; as namely for a man, who is in affliction, or desola-

solation, to desire that men may comfort him; putting him in minde of the good he hath done, or of the fruite which hath followed vpon his actions, or by his example or instruction: that so he may not be dismaied with his affliction; and if he be dismaied, that he may take heart: not admitting of that praise with any meaning to dwell therein; but as a receipt of phyficke, wherewith to cure his infirmity, and weaknes; and to induce himselfe the better to serue God, for what God is, and for the accomplishment of his holy will. As King *Ezechias* did, who being in the extremitie of sicknes, and much afflicted with the approach of death, did for the increase of his confidence in God, and for the comfort of his soule, and the redresse of his desolation, commemorateate

morate to God himself, the good
deedes he had done, saying thus;
I beseech thee, ô Lord remember
how I haue liued, and conuersed
before thee, with truth, and with-
out all hypocrisy or dissimula-
tion; & how in all things which
concerned thy Religion, I haue
serued thee with the intire affe-
ction of my heart; not honouring
any other God, but thee, who art
the true God; and how I haue per-
formed these good workes which
thou hast commaunded. In this
sort the good afflicted King, ac-
knowledging that all the good
things which he had done, were
the gifts of God, and referring
them all to him, reduced them to
his memory, and presented them
before almighty God; not resting
and relying vpon them; but vpon
the mercy and grace of God; by
meanes whereof he had wrought
them;

them: & he did it to the end that he might erect himselfe to some good hope; and to comfort his sad heart. And so it may be lawfull for an afflicted man, with the same intention, and to the same end, to like and accept of being assisted by this meanes of the pious, and comfortable speech of his neighbour.

Secondly we say, that although this manner of praise may be lawfully accepted with this moderation: yet it is not convenient to desire, or procure it; because there are many better meanes than this, whereby to be animated, and induced to vertue; and by reason of danger which there is, in louing humane praise, and the honour which growes thereby; and of making value, and taking complacence in himselfe, and so grow to do well for the honours sake. And
because

because this inconuenience and hurt groweth ordinarily vpon them who desire to be praised for this end; Saint Gregory condones it, saying; It as a thing which belongeth to arrogant persons, and giuen to vanity, when they desire to be animated to doe well, by the praises of others. And preachers and instructors of others, who for this reason desire praise, are dismaied, when they are not praised; and being ambitious louers of humane honour and fauour, they will defend and excuse themselves saying, that it is lawfull for them to desire it, for the good which they receiue by humane praise; and for this, they shew their abilities, and will be praised for them, to the end, that by meanes of this praise, they may growe more in vertue. Whereby certainly they deceiue
N
them,

themselves, and so by meanes of this error, that distemper increaseth in them, by which they loue and desire the praise of men. But the true seruants of God, are free from this vanity; for although they labour by their vertues, to equal the praises, wherewith men celebrate the same, yet they desire not to be praised by men, but they despise praise, with their heart; and for asmuch as concerneth themselves they flie from it with great earnestnes. Thus saith Saint Gregory. Whereupon it followeth clearly, that it is not convenient, for the end of profiting our selues, to desire the praise of men, by reason of the deceit, and danger which lyeth hid therein, that wee may not perhaps doe it for any true necessity, but for vanity; and not for the true profit of our soules, but to the preiudice ther-

thereof.

The intention & end for which we may lawfully desire, or admit of praise, is for the good of our neighbours; to the end that by the conceit, and good opinion; which they haue of our life and doctrine, they may grow the better by vs; edifying themselves by our good example, and inducing themselves to the loue of vertue, by meanes of our aduice and counsell, or of our gouernment, or doctrine. So saith the glorious Saint *Augustine*. He who worketh according to vertue desireth not praise: but yet praise ought to follow him, who worketh well; to the end that it may profit the, who praise, by encouraging themselves to the vertues, which they praise. But howsoever it be lawfull to desire praise for this end, because in this case, it is not

N 2

praise

praise which is loued and desired, but the profit of their neighbours; yet the better and more secure way, and that which hath been vsed by the Saints, is; not to procure or desire, euen for this very end, to be praised by men; nor that men should publish his vertues and celebrate him for the same, least some vanity or other giue it selfe to his soule. But that he leaue it to Gods prouidence, that so he may doe therein, as he shall thinke most fit, and desiring (for as much as cōcernes himself) that he be not praised.

The thing which he is to doe, is that he labour hard, and bee watchfull in doing good & holy workes; & in giuing good example in all thinges, and vsing holy discourse, & teaching sound doctrine, and giuing wholsome aduice, and desiring, that the men
who

who shall happen to see his good workes, and to heare his good wordes, may be stirred vp to know, that God is the Author of them, and may praise him for them, and be induced to serue him, performing not onely those workes which he doth and teacheth, but others which may be much better. And when he shall find or vnderstand, that men praise him, for what he doth, let him enter into his owne heart, and despise himselfe through the knowledge he hath of his sinnes; for which he deserueth all contempt; and let him hold himselfe vnworthy of such praise, for hauing offended God, who was the principall Author of those good workes. And let him desire, that men, forgetting or despising him, as he deserueth, may giue the praise and glory of those

N 3

good

good workes of God. To this are wee aduised by Saint *Augustine*, in these wordes. The praise which is giuen to a iust man, for the good he doth, he must instantly referre to God; desiring that his diuine Maiesty, who is the Authour of that good worke, may be praised for it; for the men who are good, haue not their being so, from themselves, but from God. And when mé praise vs, let vs reforme those praises, giuing all to God, who gaue vs that goodnes, which is praised by men. And in an other place, the same Saint saith, when thou shalt be praised, despise thy selfe, and desire that he may be praised in thee, who worketh in thee, the good thou doest; and so thou must not doe good thinges for thine owne praise, but for the praise of that Lord, of whom thou didst receiue the good thou doest.

And

And heerwith wee will conclude the rules which are to be obserued, both by such as praise, and such as are praised.

And so also will wee conclude our discourse, concerning those thinges which belong to the most sweet vertue of *Benignity*, and which in summe are these. To do good to our neighbours with liberality, & with a willing minde; To graunt them with ease, what they aske; To condescend to them in things lawfull; To cōuerse affably and sweetly; and both in countenance and wordes, to be cheerfull; To indure meekly the defects of others; To reprehend them with loue; To pardon them with mercy; To impose commandments vpon such as are subiect, which they may obey with gust; and to impose burdens on them which they may carry with

with ease; To be curteous and well mannered; And to praise the vertue of others for the comfort, & edification and spiritual profit of our neighbours.

By the practise of this vertue, wee shall growe most like to God, who is most *Benigne*; and we shall become acceptable to his most pitteous heart, and moreouer we shall prooue pleasing and agreeable to good men, for their edification; & more tolerable to wicked men, for the conuersion and winning of their soules to God. And hereby wee shall also mortify those inclinatioⁿs in vs, which are contrary to *Benignity*, and so obtaine victory ouer our selues; and we shall exercise many most excellent acts of other vertues, which carry relation, and respect to *Benignity*; and wee shall obtaine great peace & quietnes of heart,
where

wherby we may the better be disposed to communicate with Almighty God, by meanes of Prayer, and Contemplation.

And finally, if wee will exercise *Benignity* towards our neighbours, we shall haue more ~~experience~~ of the *Benignity* of God, through the abundant gift of spiritual graces and comforts, which he will impart to vs. And aboue all thinges, wee shall be enabled heerby, to performe his holy wil; therby doing that which he comaunderth vs, by his Blessed Apostle saying, *Ephes. 4. Be you Benigne one to wards another; Be mercifull, hauing compassion of one anothers misery; and pardoning all iniuries to one another, in such sort as God hath pardoned vs, by the vertue and merit of Christ our Lord.*

FINIS.